NEW

# The Black & White Photography Book

Digital Edition

FUTURE

THIRTEENTH EDITION

Camera guide • Editing tutorials • Essential techniques • Framing and lighting

Welcome to...

# The Black & White Photography Book

There is something magical yet traditional about monochromatic photography. All the distractions of colour are taken away and what you're left with is the structure and form of a place, object or person. In this edition of *The Black & White Photography Book*, you will be guided through all the fundamental aspects of the medium, including how to shoot professional-looking black-and-white portraits, landscapes and travel images. Soon a moody city scene will transform into piece of black and white art through your lens. In this revised edition, we have provided you with essential advice from industry professionals who shoot black-and-white images in all genres, including exceptional fine art. But it's not all just about shooting techniques and skills – we also have several editing tutorials, so you can take advantage of image-editing software to turn your black-and-white shots into monochromatic masterpieces and add effects that nature couldn't provide you with on the day. Enjoy the book.

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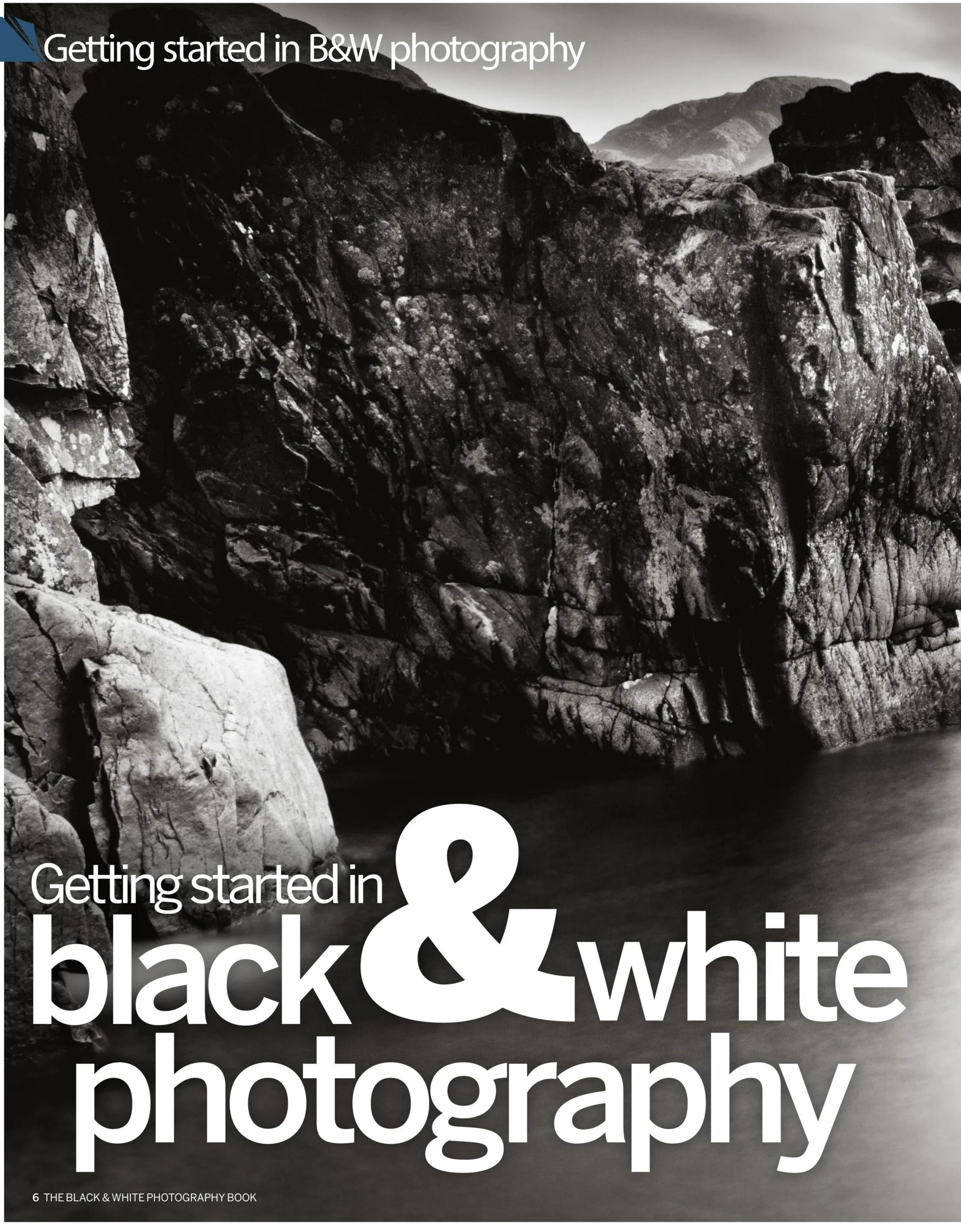


# Getting started in black & white photography

# Getting started in B&W photography

**WATERFALL IN GLENCOE**
"I was only [available] to visit this lovely location in the middle of the day and the light was harsh, so I decided to shoot in black and white and use my Lee Big Stopper to smooth out the water and give a feeling of calm against the stormy-looking sky"
**Shot details:** Canon EOS 50D with a 17-40mm lens, f9, 30sec, ISO 100
© Helen Rushton

# Master monochrome by learning how to capture incredible black-and-white images

**Photography began in black and white.** But with rolls of monochrome film and darkroom experiments, the equipment and techniques used were a long way from the digital cameras and image-editing software that we have now. With some of the world's most iconic images having been captured in the black-and-white medium, there is a lot of history behind it, but it's no surprise that it remains as popular now as when it was first developed.

Advancing successfully from film into digital over recent years, the monochrome medium has improved dramatically. Even darkroom tools and techniques have seen a digital revival with computer software, making black and white much more accessible to photography enthusiasts. As it works effortlessly with any photographic genre, the black and white medium is used across the industry, from landscape to portraiture, as well as in music, wildlife and street photography.

Over the next few pages you will learn all the fundamentals of the medium. Featuring great inside information from industry professionals, you will get to grips with all essential shooting tips, tricks and techniques behind taking successful black-and-white images. By reading this guide to black and white photography, you will soon be on your way to mastering monochrome and applying all you have learnt to your own images.

black & white

Before you begin shooting straight in monochrome, consider your camera settings. Most digital cameras offer a monochrome filter, allowing you to shoot directly in black and white; however, this setting is only available when opting to capture JPEG files. JPEGs are not ideal files for any serious photographer and are rarely used by professionals. Compressed image data JPEGs are more difficult to alter in postproduction, with many decreasing in quality after just a few adjustments. Instead, pro black-and-white photographers will always opt to use RAW if shooting a commercial project.

When looking to create great black-and-white images you need to begin by setting your camera up to shoot in the RAW image format. Although they're much larger, RAW files are ideal for digital black-and-white photography. You'll be capturing in colour first, but RAW images can later be converted with much more control, as Antonia Deutsch (**www.antoniadeutsch.co.uk**), a professional AOP photographer who specialises in black-and-white photography, advises: "When I am shooting digitally I shoot in colour and convert my images into black and white – this gives much more information in the digital files. It is extremely important not to use the camera's software but to be in control of converting the colour into black and white in the way that suits your image, in the same way that you would choose which type of film to use prior to digital technology."

Setting up your camera correctly is just one part of capturing a great black-and-white photograph; getting out there ready to compose is another. When shooting with the intention to convert your colour captures to monochrome, you will need to take a whole new approach to composition. Unlike a colour photograph where you can rely more on the hues and colour tones, a black-and-white image gets its strength from the contrast and visual composition.

Work slowly when framing your image, as looking for more unusual and unique shapes can help to add detail and texture to an otherwise bland black-and-white shot. Helen Rushton, a professional landscape photographer who runs See Life Through The Lens photography workshops (**www.seelifethroughthelens.com**), remarks: "Take your time with your composition; black-and-white images need to be strong to work well. With my black-and-white images I am always looking for bold textures, contrast between layers and lines in the composition to draw my viewers through the image."

Light is equally as important to consider when shooting for black and white. Whether it's a portrait or landscape, understanding how it falls can make a noticeable difference to the success of your black-and-white photographs. Look carefully for the highlights, midtones and shadows in your composition before you shoot, helping to ensure you expose all your captures correctly. Don't be afraid, however, to slightly overexpose an image that is intended for black-and-white conversion – often the worst it will do is increase contrast, which can in fact be ideal, as Helen adds: "Play around with your exposure to bring out and highlight details that catch your eye."

Check your image's histogram as you work on the back of your camera. This can help to ensure you're on the right track, as it is important to note that too much midtone in a histogram can make an image it appear flat when converted, as it will lack any contrast or depth.

Not all colour images work well when converted to black and white, and this is usually due to a lack of tonal range. Tonal range is largely affected by colour and, along with light, defines the contrast areas in a black-and-white photograph. When shooting, you can take some control of this simply by paying more attention to the natural colours of the subject you're photographing.

For instance, what may look like a striking photograph in colour, with two dominant colours such as red and blue, in black and white you will find these colours are

**5 TOP TIPS**

## Dean Sherwood

**Web:** www.deansherwood.com

"I am a Grimsby-based commercial photographer/ cinematographer producing high-quality imagery for commercial businesses, retail sites, portraiture, weddings, musicians/bands and HD web TV films for commercial businesses." Dean specialises in music photography and has worked closely and been on tour with big British bands such as N-Dubz, Feeder, McFly and One Direction.

**1 Choose RAW**
Photograph in RAW if you can.

**2 Emotive work**
Capturing emotion always looks great in black and white.

**3 Contrast rules**
Think about the contrast between the main subject and the background, like a light subject against a dark background.

**4 Throw some shapes**
Lines, shapes and textures look great in black and white.

**5 Composition is key**
With colour removed you have to concentrate on your composition. The viewer's focus is purely the content of the image so make it good.

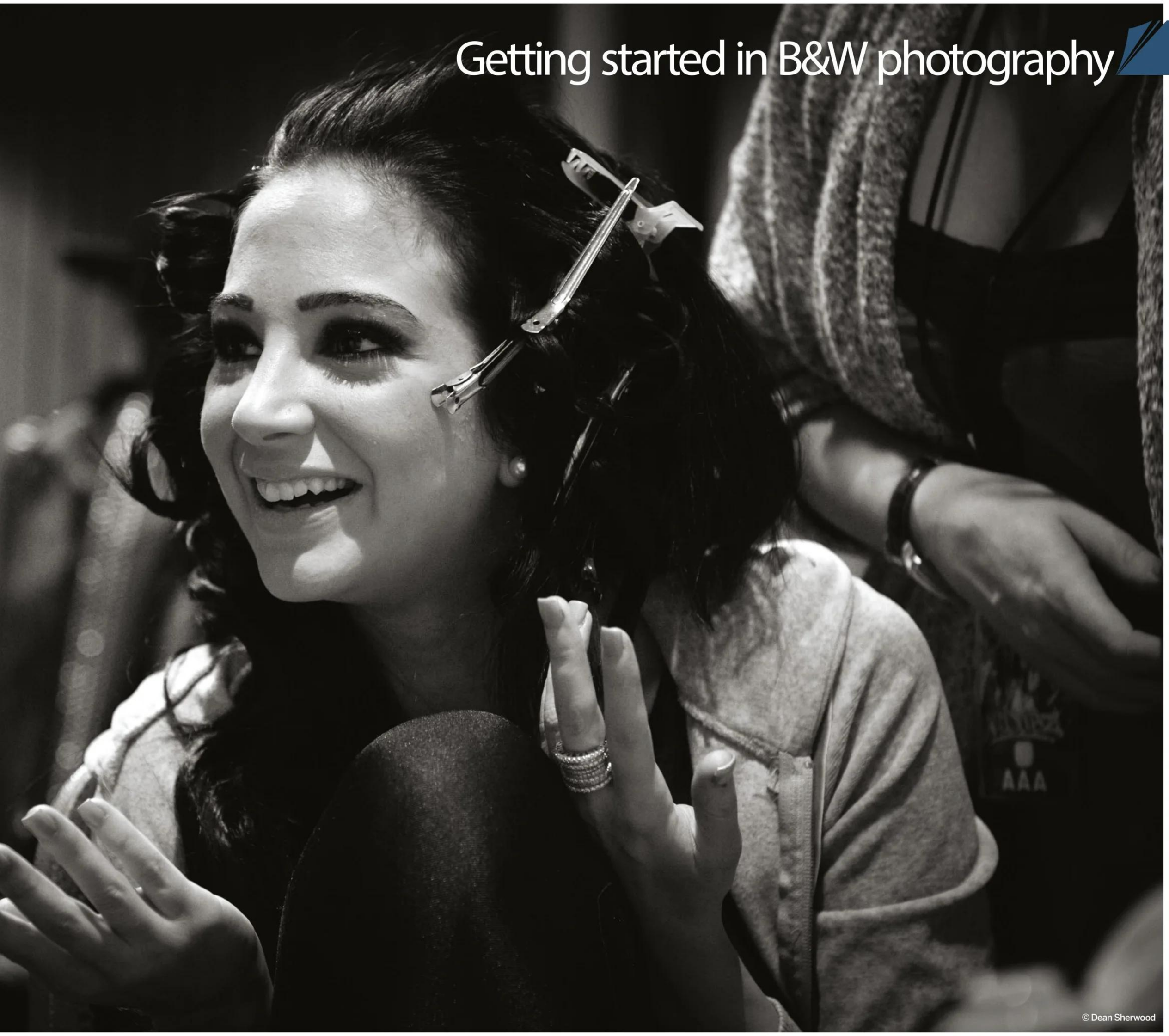
**TULISA, N-DUBZ**
Tulisa having her hair and make-up done before a show
**Shot details:** Canon EOS 1D Mark IV with 24-70mm lens at 35mm and f5.0, 1/400sec, ISO 3200

**DAPPY, N-DUBZ**
Smaller venues with good lighting offer a much better chance to get shots like this
**Shot details:** Canon EOS 1D Mark IV with a 24-70mm lens at 35mm and f5, 1/400sec, ISO 3200

**MCFLY**
The final shot of the ATN tour. There's always that glimmer of doubt: 'Will they forget I'm here?' Within a minute of this photo we were on the tour bus and leaving the venue
**Shot details:** Canon EOS 5D Mark II with a 24-70mm lens at 24mm and f2.8, 1/160sec, ISO 2000

"Not all colour images work well in black and white… due to a lack of tonal range"

# Getting started in B&W photography



# Getting started in B&W photography

©Antonia Deutsch

**SCOTS PINES**
From the British Landscapes Exhibition
**Shot details:** Nikon D300 with a 16-85mm lens at 85mm, f7.1, 1/200sec, ISO 200

"Traditional black-and-white colour filters will help to alter and adjust the colour tones"

## Quick guide to dodging and burning in Photoshop

Formerly used in traditional darkrooms, the Dodge and Burn tools have since been digitally converted for image-editing software like Adobe Photoshop. Located in the toolbar on the left-hand side of the interface, you can select either the Dodge icon to lighten areas of the image or the Burn icon to darken, creating a more controlled contrast effect. Here is a quick guide to using them.

### Dodge

**1 Set the Dodge**
Select the Dodge tool first in order to brighten areas of the frame. Adjust the brush size to a suitable diameter and select a soft edge to help blend the effect. Using the Range drop-down menu, select the Midtones as you don't want to make the highlights any brighter.

**2 Apply the effect**
Adjust the intensity of the effect by pulling the Exposure slider down low; this will allow you to build up the brightness effect carefully. You can now gently brush over the areas you wish to lighten.

### Burn

**1 Prepare to burn**
Hold down the Dodge icon until an option menu appears and select the Burn tool. Again, adjust the brush diameter to a suitable size and choose a soft edge. Select the Midtones or Shadows from the Range option depending on the areas you want to darken.

**2 Build up slowly**
Now lower the Exposure slider so that you can build up on the burn effect over time. You can now slowly start sweeping the brush over the intended areas.

**FRAN**
Quiet, thoughtful portrait
**Shot details:** Hasselblad with 150mm lens and f11, 1/125sec, ISO 125, FP4 film, scanned at 300dpi at 400% magnification full frame

© Antonia Deutsch

recorded similarly in tone and therefore your black-and-white conversion will lack any definition or contrast. Helen Rushton shares a great tip for ensuring a colour scene will work as black-and-white photograph: "I often set my Canon EOS 50D to the Monochrome setting, which gives me an instant understanding of whether the tones and shades work together to make the image I am trying to create, but as I always shoot in RAW the image is still captured in colour and then I convert that back to black and white in post production."

Even if a photograph doesn't appear promising in monochrome, there are a few other ways in which you can control how colours are recorded in your black-and-white photograph. Traditional black-and-white colour filters, which can be attached to the front of your camera, will help to alter and adjust the colour tones in an image, whether it is to soften certain colour tones or enhance others for contrast. You can also use digital conversion tools in most image-editing software, allowing you to make specific adjustments to certain colour channels for increased contrast results.

Another way that you can boost contrast in-camera is by using popular ND filters. Mainly used by landscape and traditional black-and-white photographers, there is a range of different ND filter types. Straightforward ND (Neutral Density) filters are commonly used for longer exposures, most notably in seascape scenes, softening moving water and turning it into mist. Graduated ND filters, however, are often used to darken skies.

Most professional photographers still consider filters as essential pieces of kit, as Helen points out: "My photography is all about getting the image right in-camera without lengthy processing techniques, so for me the grad filters balance out exposure and the ND grads allow me to be creative in-camera and convey the emotions I am looking for. I use the same filters shooting black and white as I do in colour: my Lee ND Graduated filters and Full ND filters."

Antonia agrees that filtering is important, particularly for landscape photography: "When shooting landscapes on film I used to use a yellow filter by default, and sometimes a red filter," she says. "Now with digital photography, I filter in Adobe's Camera Raw software. I think that filtering is essential for landscapes."

Although it fits comfortably into almost any genre of photography, black and white is often considered a genre in itself. Many photographers like Antonia have chosen to specialise solely in black-and-white photography, something that she now runs workshops on: "As I child I used to watch old black-and-white movies and was captivated by the imagery. I think that this influenced my decision to specialise

## Using filters in your photography

### Colour filters

**Red:** Popular with landscape photographers, red filters have the biggest impact on contrast and are used to enhance dramatic skies by affecting the blue and green tones in a black-and-white image.

**Yellow:** A relatively subtle filter effect, the yellow colour tends to lighten red, orange and yellow tones.

**Green:** You can enhance a dramatic sunset using a green filter, which will darken the red and orange tones.

**Blue:** Lightening the green and blue tones, the blue filter works similarly to the green colour filter in darkening red and orange tones.

**Orange:** The orange filter will darken blue and green tones and lighten yellows and oranges. It is often used in black-and-white portraiture to remove freckles and blemishes from the face.

### ND Filter (Neutral Density)

ND filters allow you to extend your camera's shutter speed without overexposing the image, as it filters light through slowly to the lens and is often used to create misty smooth water effects in seascapes and waterfalls. You can also get different strengths of ND filters depending on how much light you want to filter.

### Graduated ND filter

A graduated neutral density filter works in the same way an ND filter does except that one half of the filter is clear, gradually working up to ND filtration. These filters are most commonly used by landscape photographers in order to darken bright skies and get an even exposure throughout the entire image.

in black and white from an extremely early stage. For me black and white is a purer image which allows greater drama and more expression, be it a portrait or a landscape."

Landscapes are also a popular subject matter for black-and-white photography and have been since the early days of film. One of the key elements to great black-and-white landscapes is composition. Looking for stronger lead-in lines and shapes, you need to build depth and layers in your landscape photograph. Professional landscape photographer Helen Rushton remarks: "There are some locations I go to and they scream black and white to me because of the ambience. For me, great black-and-white images fall into two categories: very dramatic with stormy skies and bold compositions, and at the other end of the spectrum a sense of calm and minimalist composition."

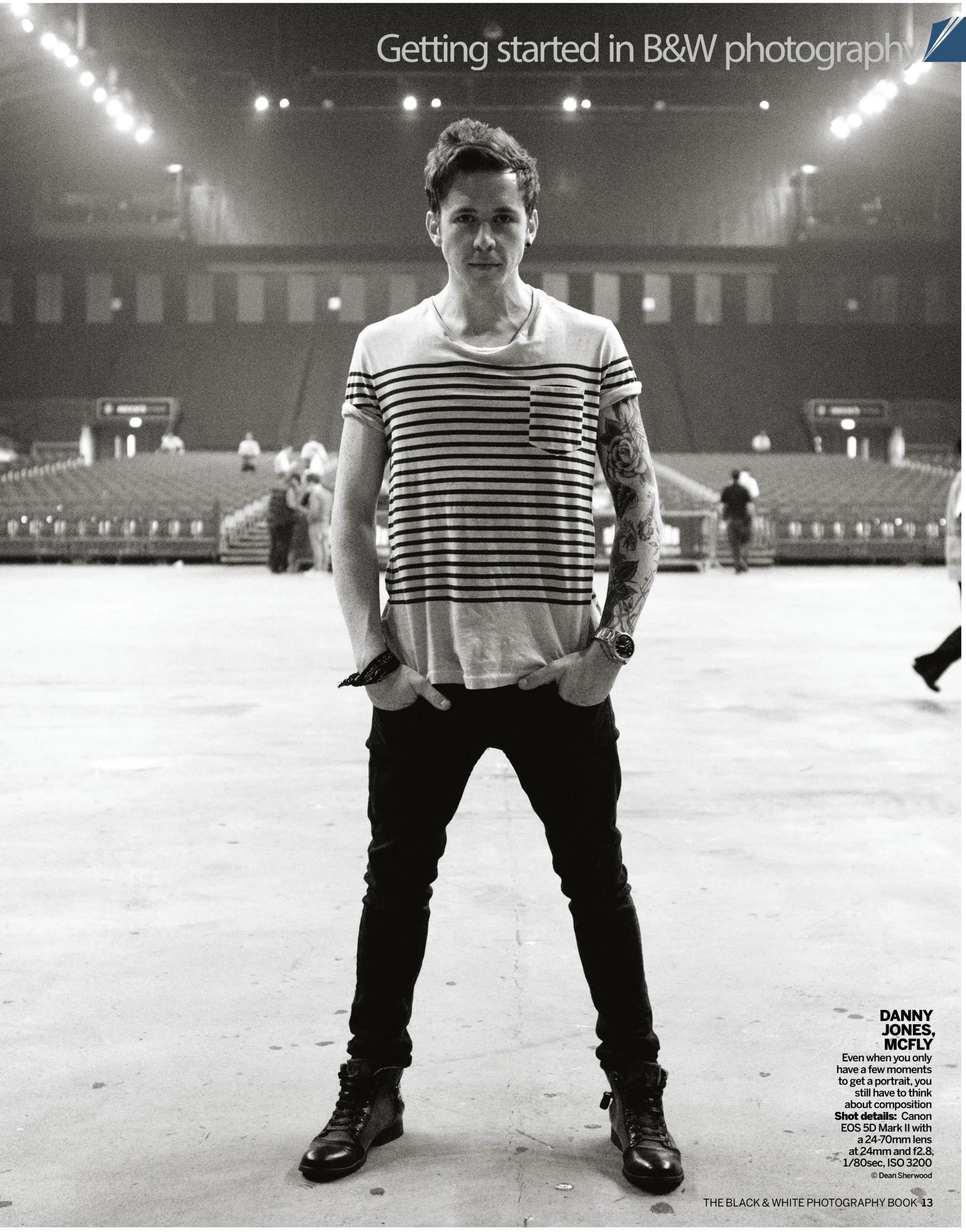
Lighting can also affect the contrast levels in all black-and-white images, particularly daylight in a landscape. Midday sun will create darker contrasting shadows, for example, whereas morning light and early evenings create a softer palette of tones. "For black-and-white landscapes I concentrate on the graphic elements of a scene, and the nature of the environment, whether it is stormy or tranquil," says Antonia. My British landscapes are taken only during the winter months when the light is lower in the sky and the trees are more sculptural."

Popular in portraiture and street photography for its timeless perception, black and white is considered most at home in this genre. Antonia points out the benefits of shooting a portrait in black and white as opposed to colour: "When shooting a portrait in black and white you are not distracted by the colours and it is much less confused; this allows me to capture the character of my sitter. My portraits are very calm and, I hope, timeless. I strive to make each portrait a true reflection of the individual."

Professional music photographer Dean Sherwood (**www.deansherwood.com**), who shoots black-and-white portraits as part of his work, says: "I think every subject deserves to be treated as just what they are, an individual. It's quite

**JAMIE**
Teenage rugby player with a battle-worn face, but shot in a romantic way
**Shot details:** Hasselblad with 150mm lens and f11, 1/125sec, ISO 125, FP4 film, scanned at 300dpi at 800% magnification and cropped to suit

© Antonia Deutsch



**DANNY JONES, MCFLY**

Even when you only have a few moments to get a portrait, you still have to think about composition

**Shot details:** Canon EOS 5D Mark II with a 24-70mm lens at 24mm and f2.8, 1/80sec, ISO 3200

© Dean Sherwood

# Getting started in B&W photography

© Helen Rushton

**CATCH THE WAVE**
"I loved the way these waves were breaking against the shore coupled with the lines from the slipway batons in Biaritz, France. I wanted to freeze the action, but also give some slight softness"
**Shot details:** Canon EOS 50D with a 70-200mm lens, f7.1, 1/6sec, ISO 100

often I will think 'this is going to look great in black and white' though. In fact, I'm not sure I've ever seen a black-and-white photograph and thought 'that would look great in colour'." He adds: "Music photographs in black and white are timeless. I can definitely recount more black-and-white music photographs I love than I can colour ones. Black-and-white music photographs carry a similar edge to that of a documentary photographers work. Take away the colour and you are left with a stripped-down clear defining moment that happened in the real world; no distractions, just a pure document in front of your eyes."

Street photography is also commonly shot in monochrome as it enables photographers to create a uniformed collection of images that work like a narrative. Often gritty with noise grain, many street photographers tend to use higher ISO numbers when shooting in order to create a retro film-like effect. Noise, however, can be distracting and will decrease the quality of an image. When it comes to using higher ISO numbers, in this instance it is often best to add grain in later during post-production. This will give you much more control over the intensity of the effect. Noise can add an interesting texture to your images, so it's considered great for street photography and stylised portraits, but it's best avoided when shooting landscapes.

Eventually you will need to convert your colour captures to black and white. Image-editing software such as Adobe Photoshop, however, makes this a relatively simple task these days. Featuring countless conversion tools there is no right or wrong way to edit, you can still apply the same old darkroom principles including using the Dodge and Burn tools for specific enhancements. Don't be afraid to experiment; black and white is a creative and artistic form of photography and, as long as you save the original file separately, nothing cannot be undone.

So, if you're ready to explore monochrome, keep in mind some of Antonia Deutsch's top tips:

- Connect with your subject
- Compose carefully
- Use your light to sculpt your subject
- Be patient and calm
- Be selective over what you shoot

**COUNTRY**
Rural landscapes work just as well as coastal ones in black and white. Check our filter guide on page 14 to see how you can enhance them

## STORMY SMOOTH WATERS

"This image was taken at one of my favourite locations on the south coast, Hengistbury Head. I had found the groyne on one of my trips there when the tide was lower and planned to come back when I could get water covering the top to smooth out the ugly areas. A very long shutter speed, coupled with a freak big wave, saw me very wet but very happy with the image I had wanted to create"

**Shot details:** Canon EOS 50D with a 17-40mm lens and f11, 4mins using a Lee Big Stopper, ISO 100

© Helen Rushton

# Shooting for black and white

**1 Set up the tripod** Once you have selected the scene you want to shoot, you will need to set up your equipment. Begin by assembling your tripod. Pulling the legs apart from the centre, unclip each section. You can pull down to extend the length of each leg. Ensure all of the legs are straight and the correct length before clicking the fastenings back into place.

**2 Are you level?** Check your tripod's bubble level to ensure the tripod is level. You may need to extend or shorten one leg to accommodate for rocky or uneven ground. You can now attach your camera to the top plate by screwing it correctly onto the mount. Place the plate back onto the tripod head and click it securely into place.

**3 Camera ready** Ensure you have inserted a fully charged battery and empty memory card correctly into the camera. Turn on your camera and search through your camera's menu interface in order to format your memory card. This is important before a shoot as it deletes unwanted data that could slow the card's performance.

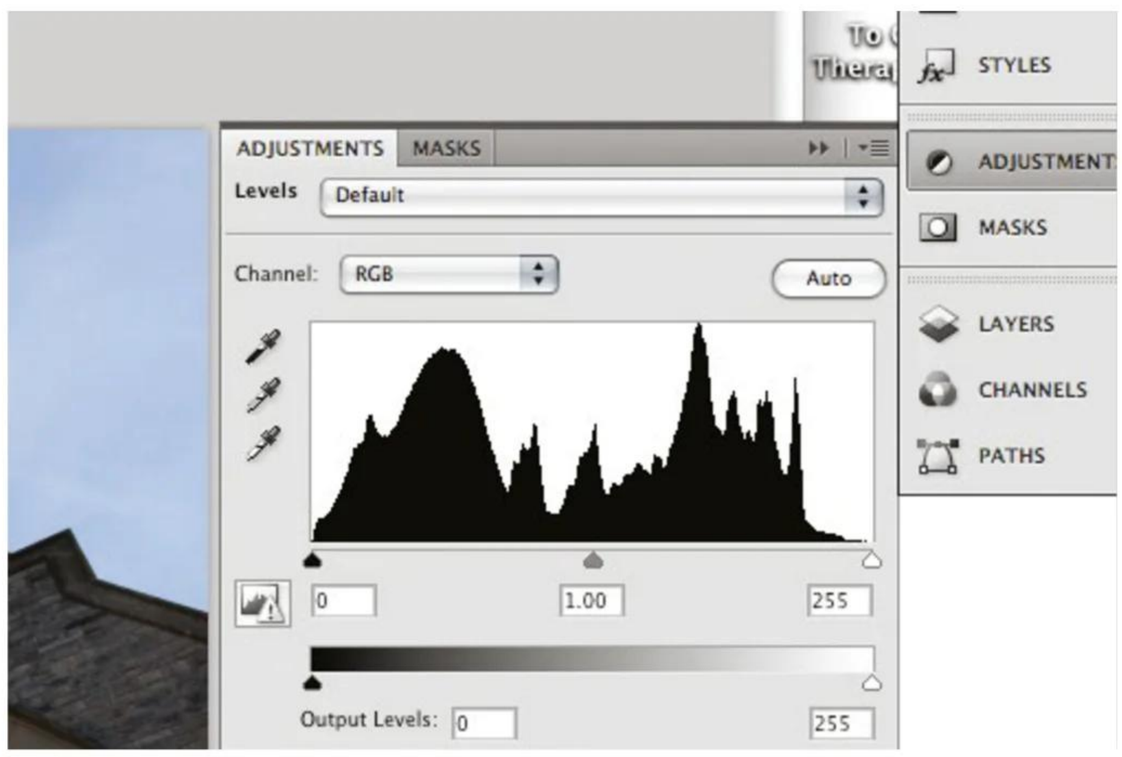
**4 File format** You can now set your camera to shoot either just RAW files or RAW+JPEG files. RAW+JPEG will allow you to set your JPEGs to monochrome capture separately so you can preview the black-and-white results while retaining and still capturing a colour RAW file for editing. Be aware that this option will take up more memory space.

**5 ISO option** Ensure your ISO settings are low and set between 200-400 ISO to avoid distracting noise in your black-and-white conversions. If you want to add noise later for aesthetic reasons, you can do this during post production with more control over the effect.

**6 Attach the filter** You will now need to attach the filter ring to the end of your lens; this will allow you to connect the filter and filter holder onto the end of your camera. Ensure you have the correct diameter filter ring for your lens and gently screw it into place. Now slide the filter holder on top.

**7 Line it up** You can slide your filters into place. Begin by selecting the right filter type and strength; hold it around the edges to avoid getting fingerprints on the front. When using a grad ND filter, use your camera's viewfinder or live view ensure the grad line sits perfectly on the horizon.

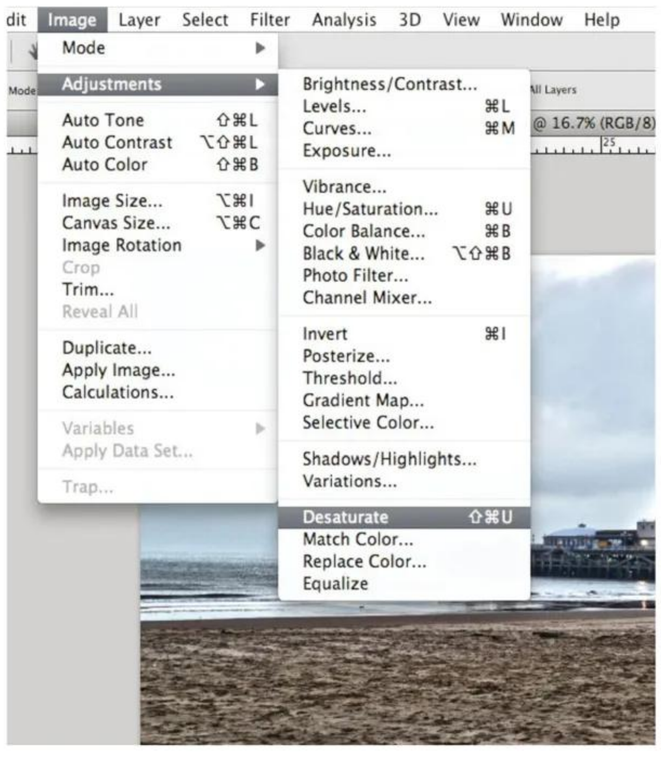
**8 Final adjustments** Make any last-minute adjustments to your composition using the tripod. You can now change your exposure settings, adjusting the aperture and shutter speed to suit the scene. Check your camera's in-built light meter through the viewfinder as an exposure guide.

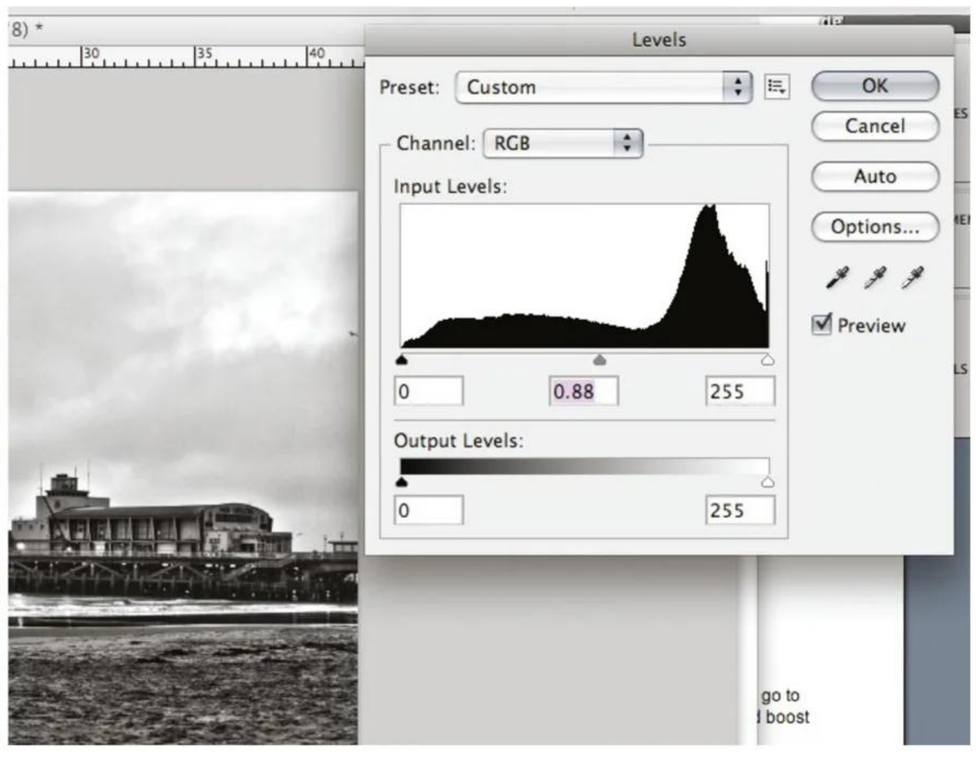



**9 Check the histogram** While shooting remember to keep checking your histogram at the back of the camera for a good idea on how the shadows, midtones and highlights are looking. If you opted to shoot RAW+JPEG with a monochrome filter on the JPEG files, now is a good time to see how the RAW images will look when converted.

"When shooting, keep checking your histogram"

**10 Photoshop** Use a card reader to open your colour image in Photoshop to convert. Begin by selecting an image, go to Image>Adjustments>Desaturate to remove all the colour and use Image> Adjustments>Levels to enhance and boost contrast by adjusting the shadows and highlights sliders slightly, but paying more attention to the midtones.



# Getting started in B&W photography

# Top 10 tips

## Shoot in colour

Shoot your black-and-white images in colour first and convert them to monochrome later using photo-editing software. This will give you more control over the results, particularly the strength of the overall contrast. It also means that if the image doesn't work in black and white you still have the colour copy.

## Texture and interest

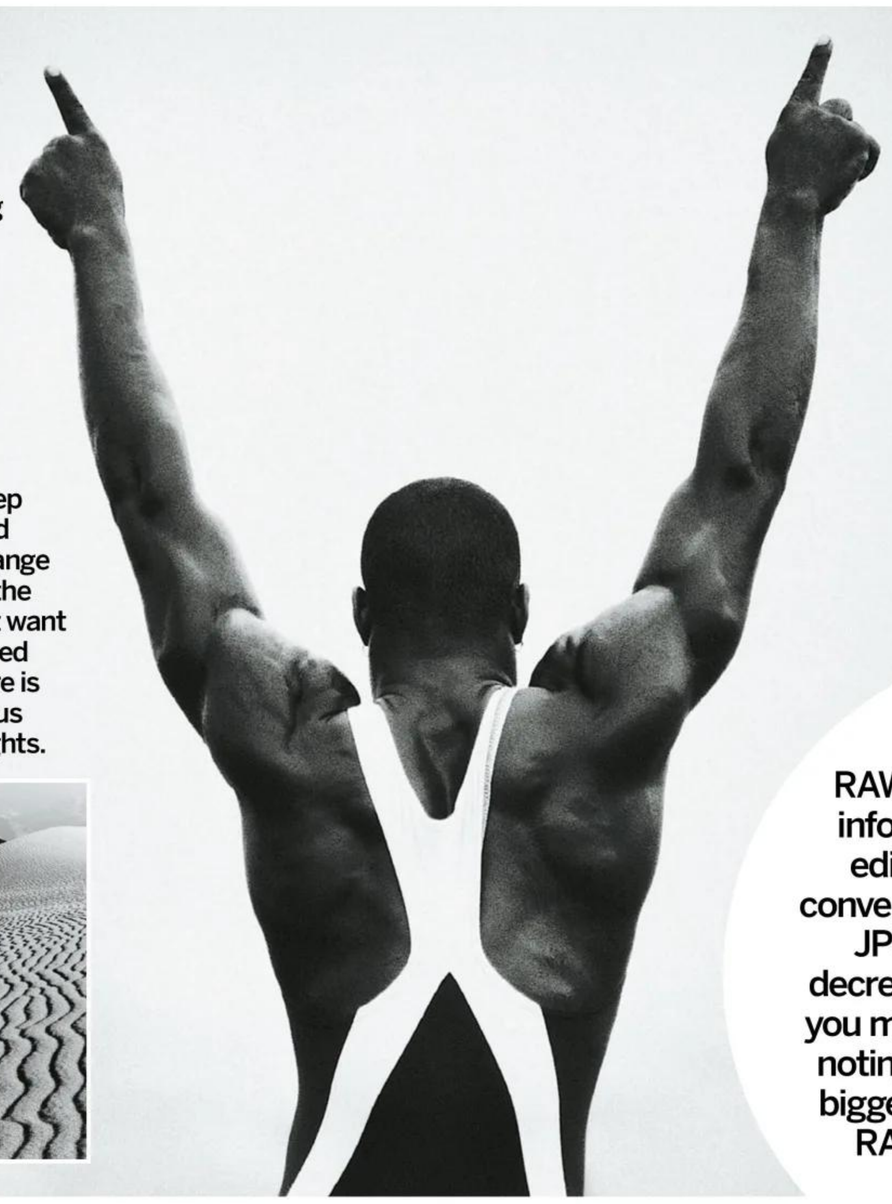
When composing, think carefully about how textures can be recorded in black and white in order to add a feeling of depth. Stormy skies in a landscape is a great example, giving you interest at the top of the frame that will still help to draw your eye down into the focus of the frame.

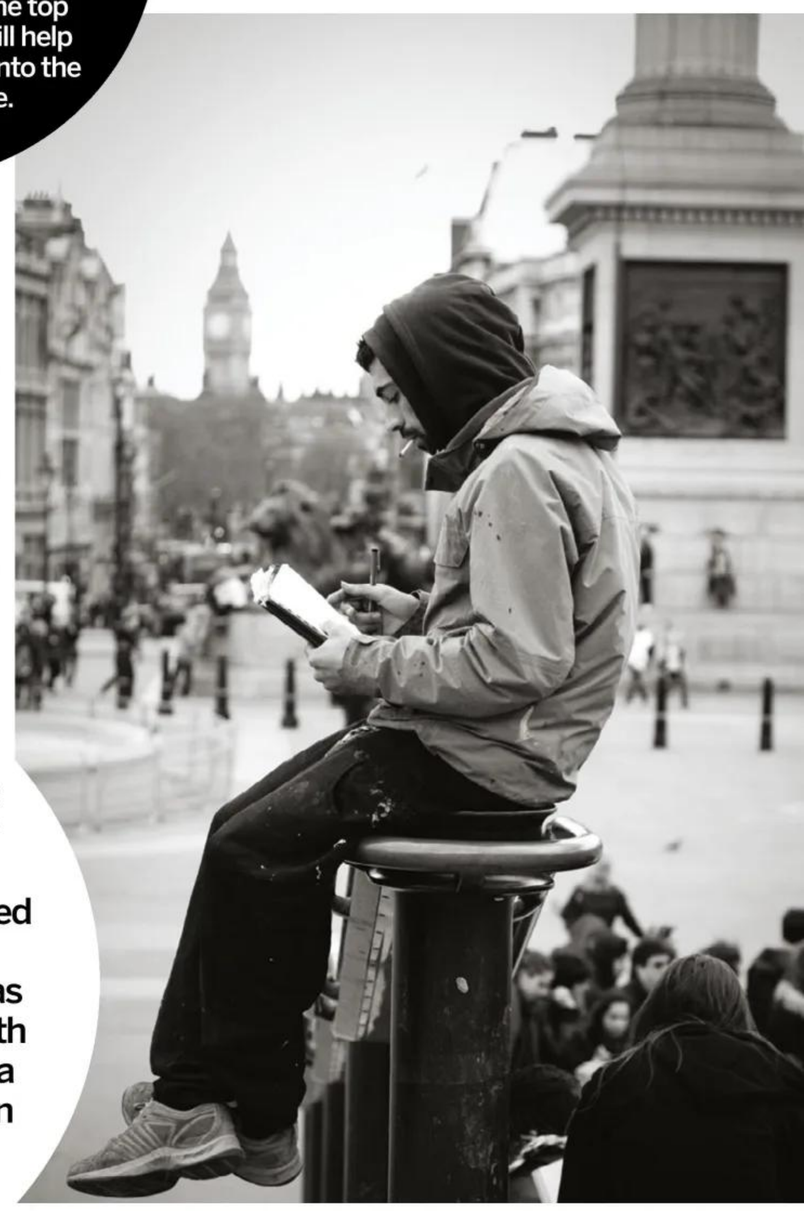
## Conversion

When converting your colour captures to black and white, keep it simple. There is no right or wrong way to convert; just experiment in your photo-editing software. A good adjustment tool to look out for to begin with is Desaturate or Convert to Monochrome. From there you can build on contrast levels.

## Histogram

While shooting, remember to keep an eye on your histogram. A good exposure should show an even range with no peaking at either end of the graph. Remember that you don't want too much information compressed within the midtones. Ensure there is enough information/mountainous range in the shadows and highlights.



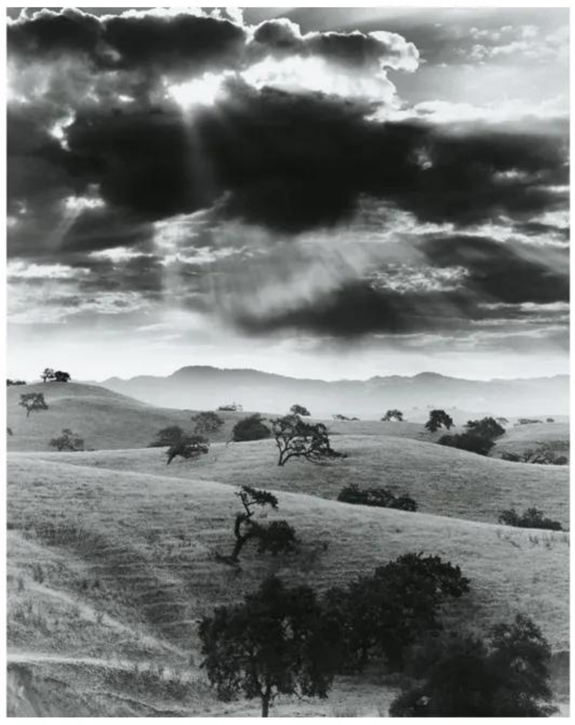


## File formats

RAW files offer you a lot more information, which is ideal for editing and black-and-white conversions. Unlike a compressed JPEG file, a RAW one won't decrease too heavily in quality as you make adjustments. It's worth noting that you may also need a bigger memory card to shoot in RAW as they take up much more space.

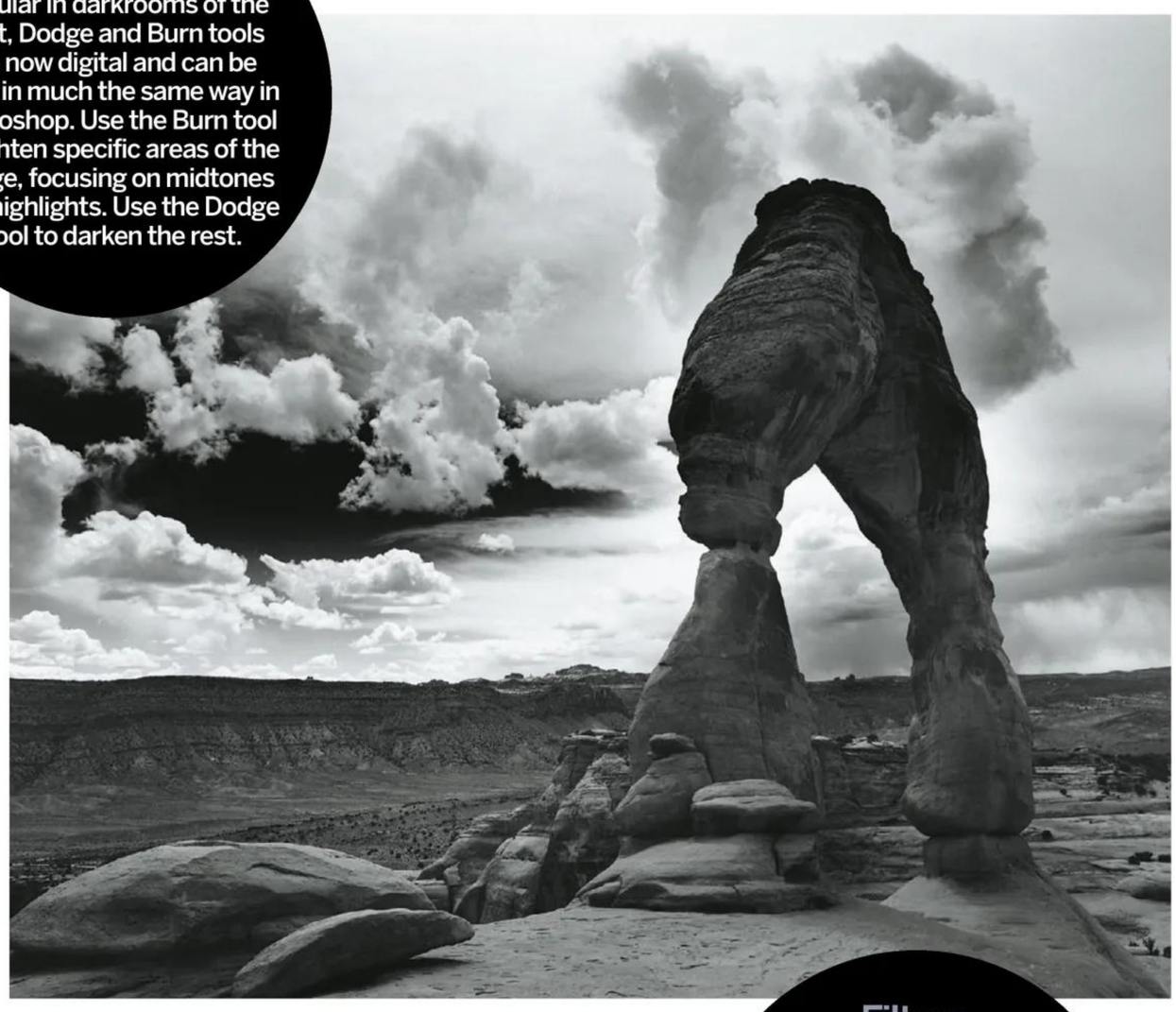
## Light and shade

Look for light when shooting in black and white, as contrast is important if you want to avoid flat image results. Think carefully about the time of day you shoot in, as this can also impact your image's contrast levels. Midday sun has a stronger light and brings out darker shadows, as opposed to early morning and evening light.



## Dodge and Burn

Popular in darkrooms of the past, Dodge and Burn tools are now digital and can be used in much the same way in Photoshop. Use the Burn tool to lighten specific areas of the image, focusing on midtones and highlights. Use the Dodge tool to darken the rest.



## Composition

Slow down when composing a black-and-white image, as this is the most crucial element for your photo's success. Look for strong shapes and lead-in lines to draw the eye into the image. Find more dynamic forms to focus on which will also engage your viewer.

## Filters

Don't be afraid to use filters when taking a photograph; you will be surprised by the instant improvement to your shots. Invest in some great-quality grad filters to darken the sky, ND filters for longer exposures and colour filters for more creative tonal adjustments in black and white.

## Colour tones

Pay attention to the colours within the frame before you shoot. Not all colours translate well together in black and white; what may look contrasting and strong in colour can often convert to similar in tone and ultimately flat in contrast.

# Getting started in B&W photography

# Essential kit for B&W photography

## If you're looking for the best equipment for a monochrome workflow, then this is the guide for you

**This whole bookazine is dedicated to the intricate art of black-and-white photography, and one area that really has to be considered to get the best results is the kit that you choose to use.** Over these pages, we will explore all the top kit – from your cameras and lenses, to software and printing, to finally presenting your work. There are loads of genre-specific features that you need to look for, and we will break these down as we move through this kit guide.

One decision that you will need to make when it comes to monochrome photography is whether you are going to shoot in black and white, or convert it after in post-production. There are advantages to both. If you shoot in black and white, then you can see how the tones and contrast are applied in the image, which means that you can correct the shot. We have included cameras that have monochrome modes for this, as well as lenses and filters that will improve your black-and-white shots.

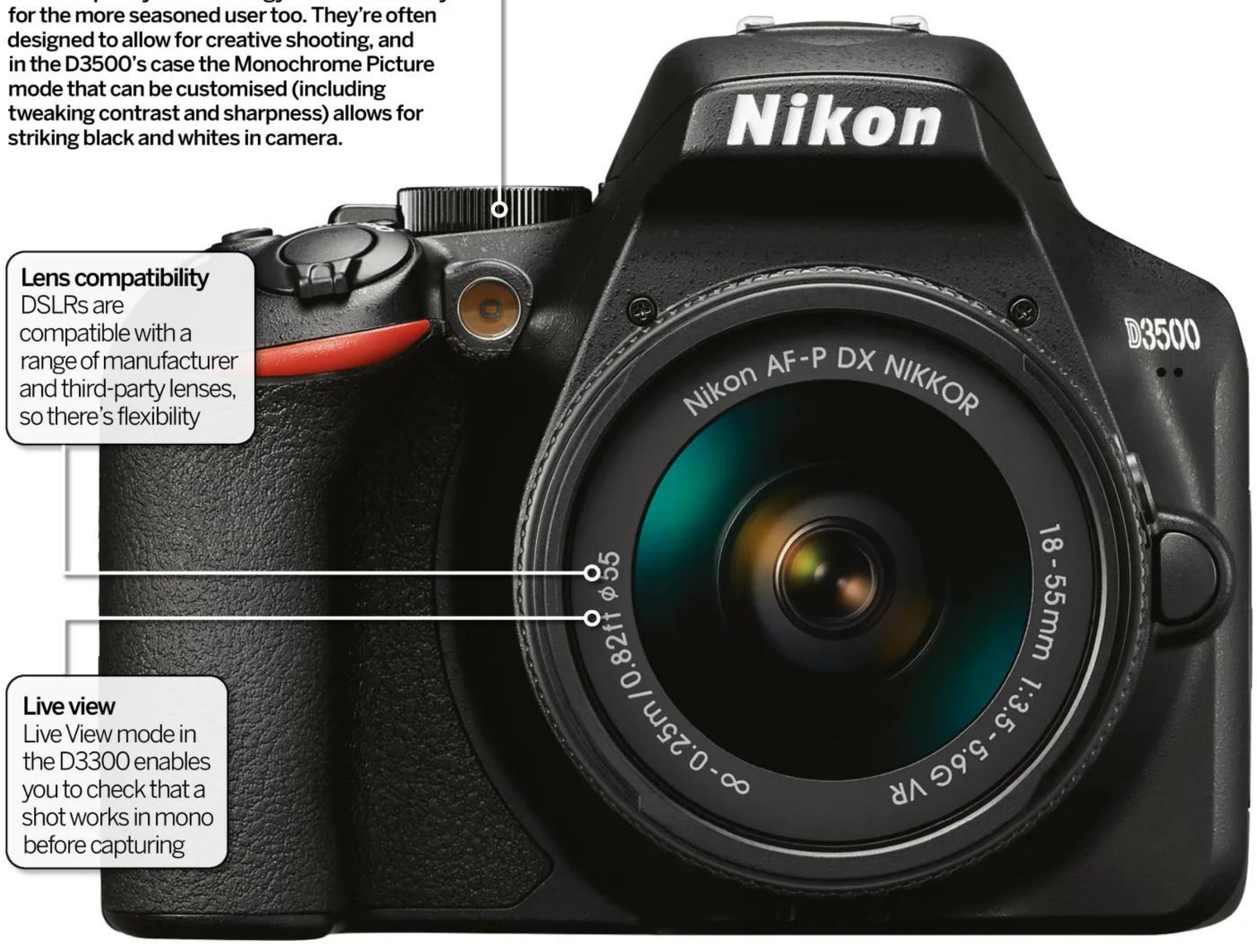
However, we also take a look at the best software options to do the conversion for you, the advantage being that you can keep the colour version and work on the mono version separately. Think carefully about your requirements and then read on to find out what your kit bag is crying out for…

# Cameras

Picking a camera for monochrome work isn't so different from choosing a camera for colour work. Indeed, it's unlikely that your only use for a camera will be black-and-white imaging. However, ensure that your chosen model has features that will help you to capture the subjects that you want to portray in mono. Ensure that you look for a camera that offers high quality, detailed images, as sharp images are especially suited to monochrome conversion. Also look at the ISO control, as noise will be enhanced in monochrome – so unless you are going for a particularly retro effect, then this isn't preferable. We mainly focus on interchangeable lens cameras here, as these are the best option for covering all manner of photographic projects. Whether you are into shooting landscapes or portraits, macros or motion, then you have a wealth of flexibility by opting for a DSLR. Keep an eye out for black-and-white shooting options, as this will enable you to compose with mono in mind.

## ENTRY-LEVEL DSLR

**Entry-level models like the Nikon D3500 shown here are great options for those moving up into the DSLR arena for the first time, but still have plenty of technology and functionality for the more seasoned user too. They're often designed to allow for creative shooting, and in the D3500's case the Monochrome Picture mode that can be customised (including tweaking contrast and sharpness) allows for striking black and whites in camera.**




**Built-in filters**
Many DSLRs have a black-and-white filter, which is perfect for capturing more atmospheric shots

**Lens compatibility**
DSLRs are compatible with a range of manufacturer and third-party lenses, so there's flexibility

**Live view**
Live View mode in the D3300 enables you to check that a shot works in mono before capturing

## More options

From DSLR to compact system cameras, here are some great camera options

### MID-RANGE DSLRs

If you would like an alternative to Nikon, you could try the Canon EOS 80D pictured below. This model sits in Canon's mid-range and so is a bit higher in price than the Nikon D3500. It does come with some pro specs, though, such as a 24.2MP APS-C CMOS sensor for high-quality images, 7fps continuous shooting to capture the action and an ISO up to 16,000 for low light shots. It also comes with Dual Pixel CMOS AF for quicker focusing in live view – great for shooting from your hip for black and white street shots.




### COMPACT SYSTEM CAMERA

Rather than being a buying a larger DSLR, you could try a compact-system camera with interchangeable lenses, which means that you have the benefit of flexibility and compactness. The Panasonic Lumix DMC-G7 is one such CSC, offering a 16MP Live MOS sensor, a flip-out touch screen for quick settings changes and 4K video record mode. It also comes with 24 scene modes including monochrome and filters such as Old Days, High Key, Low Key, Sepia and four monochrome filters.

### HIGH-END CAMERA

If you have a lot of money to spend, it's worth getting a high-end camera to capture images at even greater quality. The pricey Leica M has a 24MP 35mm sensor and the rangefinder system offers accurate focusing. Leica also produces the world's first digital camera designed exclusively for shooting in black and white, the M Monochrom. This rangefinder offers a 24MP 35mm monochrome sensor and up to ISO 25000.

# Lenses

Picking a lens for your camera to use for black and white photography is dependent on the subject that you're shooting. If landscape is preferable, then it is worth looking into an ultra-wide angle zoom lens, so that you can play with your composition to bring focus to the details and heighten the perspective, both traits that are essential to monochrome photos. We have picked a couple of our favourites here, new and old, and these have built-in stabilisation features and large apertures to help get that perfect tonal range that is so necessary for working in black and white.

If it's portraits that you're working with, then look for a wide aperture lens, so the maximum amount of light is taken in during low-light and indoor shots. These lenses are also good for working in conjunction with lighting setups to produce high and low-key creative effects.

"Picking a lens for your camera to use for black and white photography is dependent on the subject that you're shooting"

**Beneficial design**
This lens is designed in such a way that it minimises lens fall-off and increases peripheral brightness

## Keep it steady

When you are taking monochrome shots, it's important to use a tripod as this will help to eliminate blur that won't translate well into black and white shots, with blur showing up as streaks of grey and white. This is especially true in landscape and portrait shots, where pin-sharp images will look the most effective. We like the ranges from Manfrotto and Induro (pictured above), for example.

**Weight**
This compact lens weighs just 670g, making it good for taking out and about

**Release your creativity**
The wide-angle view will exaggerate perspective, giving landscape photographers room for creative compositions

## LENSES FOR LANDSCAPES

Landscapes are one of the most popular subjects for monochrome photography, and an ultra-wide-angle lens like the Sigma 12-24mm f4.5-5.6 DG HSM II (pictured) will do a great job of capturing them. Landscape lenses need to be lightweight and quiet, and the Sigma even has a full-frame view with Super Multi-Layer Coating to reduce flare and ghosting.

## Lenses & subjects

See what you need for what you want to shoot

### TRAVEL AND STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

When you're shooting street photos, you'll need a lens that will let you get in close to your subject while you stay back, so this 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 zoom lens is perfect. The longer focal length will help you get great candids but the wide angle also means you can capture landscapes too while travelling. It also has quiet STM focusing and Dynamic Image Stabilizer to reduce camera shake.

### PORTRAITS

If it is monochrome studio portraits that you're interested in, then you should look for a fast maximum aperture and a rounded diaphragm to help produce softly blurred depth-of-field effects. The Nikon 85mm f1.4G AF NIKKOR (pictured) is a great lens that will help you to achieve people shots in the studio. It's a medium telephoto lens with a fast maximum aperture of f1.4 and internal focusing. It's lightweight too at 595g, which isn't necessary for portraits, but it always helps!

### MULTIPURPOSE

If it's a multipurpose lens that you require, then you will need a good all-rounder. The Sigma 24-70mm f2.8 EX DG HSM (pictured) is a large aperture, standard zoom lens, meaning that it is as comfortable taking portrait shots as it is landscapes. The f2.8 aperture throughout the zoom range ensures quality when indoors or in low light, and the lens coatings help to remove aberrations and distortion. It has HSM for quiet yet fast focusing and it can focus down to a distance of 38cm.

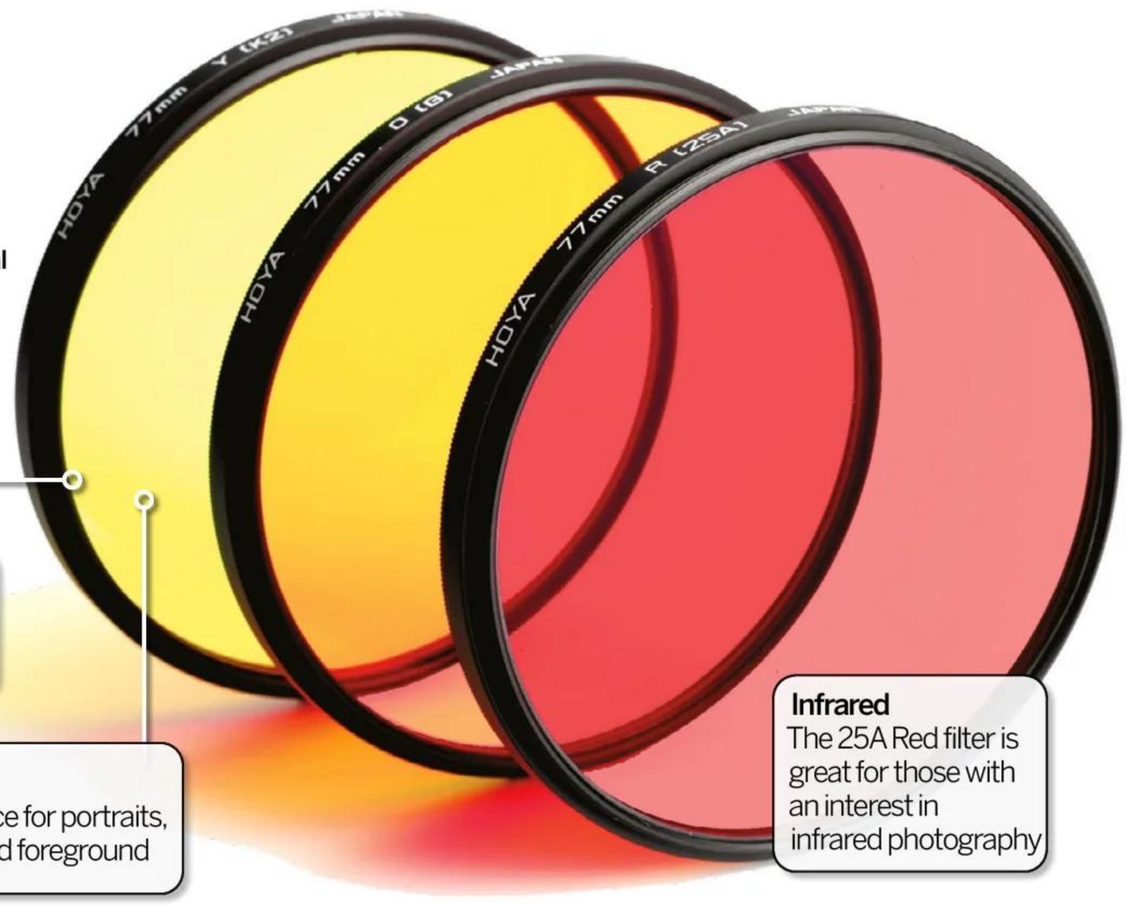
# Getting started in B&W photography

# Filters

Filters are essential in black and white photography if you want to produce the very best results. By using them, you can make a big difference to the tonal range of your photos. With good black and white photos the viewer can almost visualise the scene in colour without any colour information present, simply by the tones presented. When a filter is used, it enhances certain colour tones in the final image, and can make a monochrome image really pop. By using a filter of a set colour, you will lighten that particular colour in tone, and you will pop the tones of the complementary colours. Yellow filters are particularly popular, as they are good for making subtle changes, especially to the blue sky in landscape shots. Red is best for creative effects with loads of contrast. Blue and green are also available.

### HOYA COLOUR FILTERS

Hoya offers a wide range of coloured filters, which can be used to enhance the tones in your monochrome images. Prices vary depending on the size and the colour chosen, so visit the website to find out more. Use the Red filter to boost contrast in images with red, brown and orange – perfect for autumnal shots. There are also corrective filters, warm filters and portrait filters to choose from.




**Compatibility**
Hoya offers a massive range of different colours of filter to suit all lens types

**Contrast boost**
The K2 Yellow filter, which is a popular choice for portraits, can help to boost contrast between sky and foreground

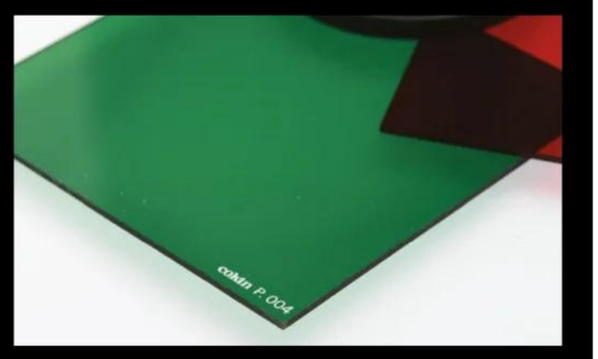
**Infrared**
The 25A Red filter is great for those with an interest in infrared photography

## Filter options

Filter out the wheat from the chaff

### COKIN FILTERS

Cokin's P series of filters are square filters designed to fit with a filter holder. You need to chose the holder to for your lens, but you can then use the P filter on any lens size as long as you have the holder for it. Cokin's colour filters are modestly priced and come in a range of colours, so you can experiment with tones at minimal cost. The P004 pictured here will lighten green areas to show more detail, which is great for green landscape scenes and foliage.




### TIFFEN

Tiffen does a wide range of different filters, with a dedicated line-up for use with black and white. Available in a massive range of sizes, check out the website for details of filters in yellow, red, green, deep yellow, blue and more. For each filter, Tiffen explains how they can best be used in your photography, so you can ensure that you are making the right choice for your needs. List prices are quoted in US Dollars, but most of them can be bought from Amazon.

### KENKO R72

If you are interested in experimenting with infrared digital photography, then this is touted as the 'most popular infrared filter in the world'. That's some claim, but it is a well-priced offering that comes in a wide range of sizes. The filter permits light of around 700 wavelength to pass through, giving that recognisable infrared effect. It effectively filters out all light bar infrared light, which can't be seen by the naked eye.

## Pick your colour

The colour of filter that you choose will have a dramatic impact on your final photo. Here we show you what four popular colour filters do to the same monochrome image.

# Software

Post-production is one area of the photographer's workflow that just can't be ignored. While many cameras will come with their own software solutions, if you want dramatic and striking black and white images then you need access to a good image editor. We have listed the four best software packages, but there are others out there that are worth considering.

Photoshop Elements, for example, has really upped its game over the last few versions, so if the full Photoshop package seems a little heavy handed for the editing you require, then it's a good option at a fraction of the cost. Photoshop, however, is now available in monthly payments through Creative Cloud, which helps to break the cost down. Lightroom is also a good alternative to Photoshop, as it's tailored just to photographers, rather than digital artists, 3D artists, web designers and the many other creatives. And don't forget that the majority of big-name packages will be extendable via plug-ins.

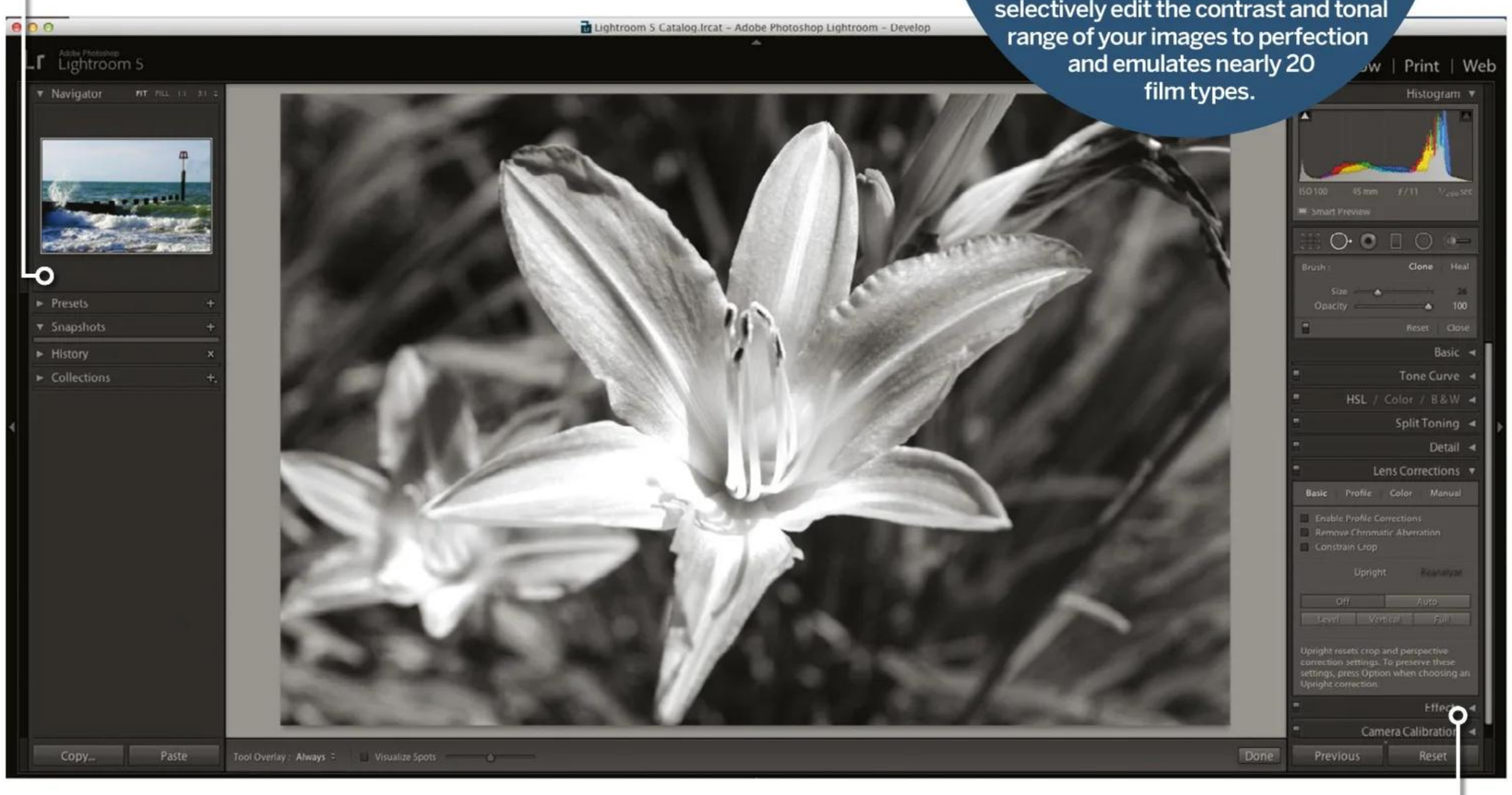
"If you want dramatic and striking black and white images then you need access to a good image editor"

**Catalog**
Lightroom's easy-to-use interface makes it easy to find the image you want

**Plug-ins**
Lightroom supports external plug-ins to extend its functionality even more

## Plug-ins

While each of the programs we have picked here does a great job with black and white, there are dedicated plug-ins built specifically for improving your black and whites. We recommend Nik Software's Silver Efex Pro, which is now packaged with six other plug-ins as part of the Nik Collection. It is compatible with Photoshop, Lightroom and Aperture. It uses U Point technology to accurately and selectively edit the contrast and tonal range of your images to perfection and emulates nearly 20 film types.



## PHOTOSHOP LIGHTROOM

Lightroom has really worked hard to win popularity among professional photographers, offering more and more editing options in each version so that having Photoshop is less essential. Its sophisticated colour and tone tools mean that when working with monochrome or colour images, it's a relatively simple process to enhance contrast in a nondestructive manner.

**Easy edits**
The editing options are becoming more and more advanced while still retaining ease of use

**Newest version**
Lightroom 5 offers advanced black and white conversions, letting you adjust a mix of colour bands

## More software

Select the image-editing software you need

### PHOTOSHOP CC

The new subscription plans have made Photoshop super affordable. You can get a subscription to Photoshop CC from £8.57/$9.99 per month, and continually update the software with new features.

Photoshop is the top image-editing software for a reason, but you may find it provides more than you need. If you're working with colour images, the Black & White adjustment layer is a great way to tailor results without affecting the original permanently, and the many colour and tone tools mean that monochrome images can be made to pop.

### TONALITY PRO

MacPhun's black and white conversion software (for Mac only) is a good value option for monochrome enthusiasts. Its interface is easy to get to grips with, providing you with functionality such as RAW processing with 16-bit support, 150 presets (which appear as thumbnails along the bottom), layers, grain effects and photo frames – plus plenty more. The basic version is currently £13.49/$17.99, but for just £49.99/$69.99 the Pro version adds plug-in support for Photoshop and Lightroom, blend modes for the layers, a Zone System feature and more besides.

### CAPTURE ONE PRO 11

Phase One's RAW converter also packs in image-editing solutions, as well as being able to help to organise photo libraries. Its toolset is full of advanced options for improving colour, tone and detail, which is essential when working in black and white. For any colour images that need to be converted, there is a dedicated tool and even a workspace for black and white. There are some great black and white presets as well as split toning options.

# Printers

Once you have a perfectly shot and edited black and white picture, it's time to turn your attention to output options. A printer is the first vital step in the workflow chain, and there are two key types of printer that you are likely to come across. First, there are the consumer printers, which we will look at here, and then there are professional printers, if you want to get more serious. When looking at consumer printers, don't just go straight in for the most expensive you can afford, but don't snap up super-low bargains either – both can be misleading. Think carefully about what you need from your printer. If you need innovation and quality, then buy the best that you can afford within your budget; however, if bells and whistles don't tickle your fancy, you may be paying for things that you don't really need. We present some great options for you here.

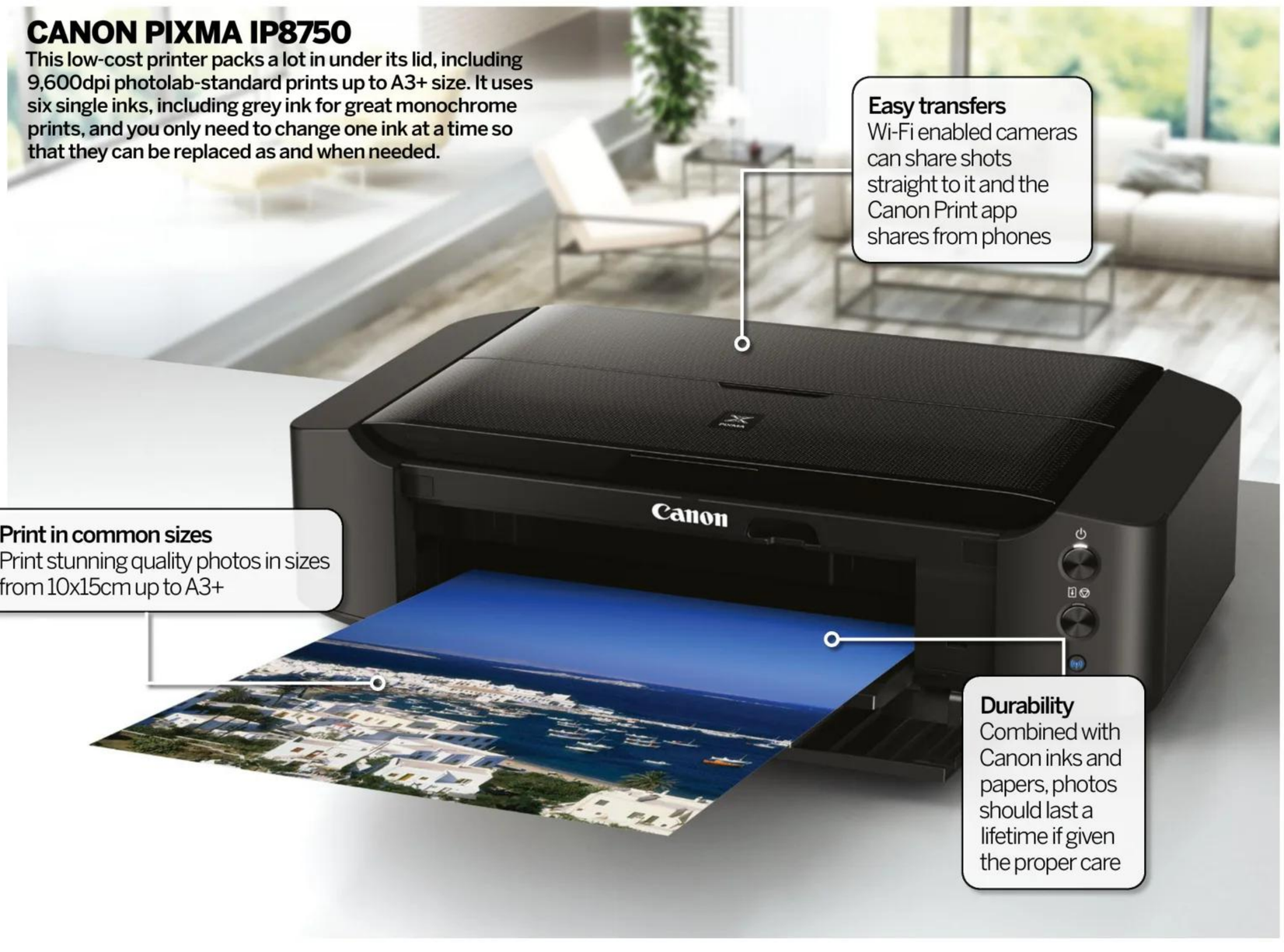
"You may be paying for things that you don't really need"

## Scanning

If you are interested in scanning in old monochrome film photos, then it is worth investing in a dedicated scanner rather than using the all-in-one functions of many of these printers. Photo scanners come with a negative or slide tray, which holds the film in place while it's scanning, ensuring the highest quality. All-in-one printers with scanners are usually best for document scanning.

## CANON PIXMA IP8750

This low-cost printer packs a lot in under its lid, including 9,600dpi photolab-standard prints up to A3+ size. It uses six single inks, including grey ink for great monochrome prints, and you only need to change one ink at a time so that they can be replaced as and when needed.


Easy transfers
Wi-Fi enabled cameras can share shots straight to it and the Canon Print app shares from phones
Print in common sizes
Print stunning quality photos in sizes from 10x15cm up to A3+
Durability
Combined with Canon inks and papers, photos should last a lifetime if given the proper care
Canon

## More printers

Home printing doesn't have to mean low quality

### HP INSTANT INK READY ENVY 5540 ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER

For an affordable price, the Envy 5540 is a high-quality inkjet model that can also make photocopies and scans. The compact shape is designed to fit on your desk or on a shelf, so it won't take up too much room. You can also print directly from your smartphone and tablet using an app and it will make speedy work of it too, printing 12 pages per minute for black and white. You can print borderless photos and the built-in photo tray lets you print 4x6-inch photos without changing paper. A great model for home printing.

### CANON SELPHY CP910

If you're after a more compact printer, Canon's Selphy series may be for you. The CP910 is portable enough to take with you wherever you may need it, and it comes with a built-in battery so you can use it outdoors too. Alongside Wi-Fi and Airprint support, it has the ability to plug an SD card or USB stick into it, so it's perfect for printing on the go. The straightforward on-screen instructions make it a breeze to use and you can get high-quality prints in just 47 seconds. This printer lets you produce 4x6 prints, which is a standard postcard size, or it can do square and credit card size prints too.

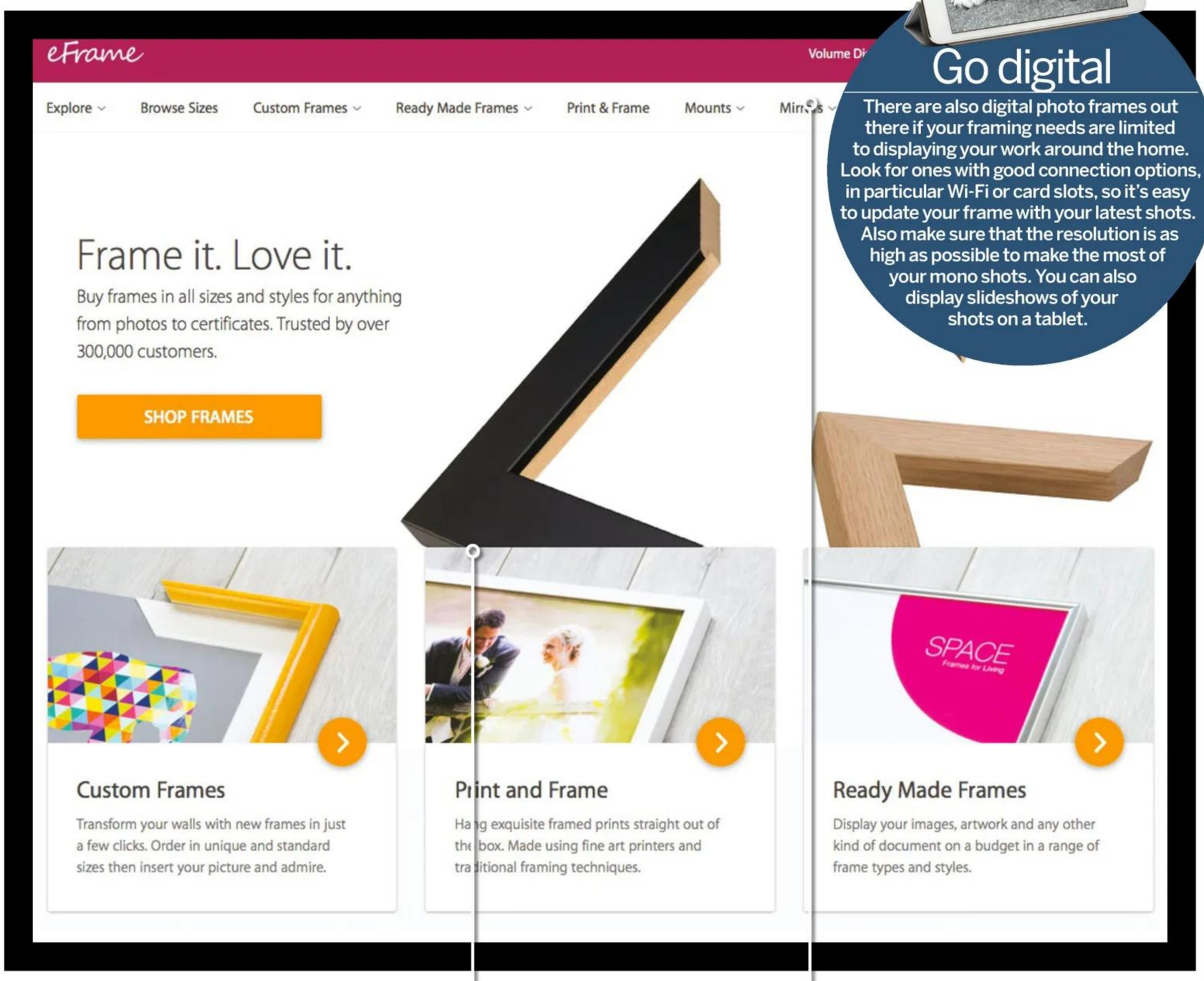
### EPSON XP-950 PRINTER

This compact model has a wealth of features. It has wireless connectivity, can print A3, A4 or photo print sizes without you having to reload paper thanks to multiple trays and you can print directly onto CDs and DVDs. It's compatible with six-colour Claria Photo HD Ink for high quality results with rich blacks and vibrant colours. You can print from your phone and email photos directly to the printer from anywhere in the world, and Wi-Fi Direct lets you connect to the printer without having to connect to a router. It's also compatible with Google Cloud Print.

# Frames and mounting

It's all well and good producing amazing black and white images, but if you never display them, the prints will end up going dusty in an old shoebox. Make your photographs into the works of art that they are by investing in a decent frame. Custom frames give the best results as the size, finish and mounting method are all interchangeable so that you can get exactly what you want. This is especially useful if you want to print at a non-standard size to fit a particular wall or to show the work off to its best potential. Also, for holding personal exhibitions or selling work, then custom frames give that air of quality and uniqueness. Here we round up four of the best online services that enable you to create the frame that you want with no restrictions.

"Custom frames give that air of quality and uniqueness"


eFrame
Explore
Browse Sizes
Custom Frames
Ready Made Frames
Print & Frame
Mounts
Frame it. Love it.
Buy frames in all sizes and styles for anything from photos to certificates. Trusted by over 300,000 customers.
SHOP FRAMES
Custom Frames
Transform your walls with new frames in just a few clicks. Order in unique and standard sizes then insert your picture and admire.
Print and Frame
Hang exquisite framed prints straight out of the box. Made using fine art printers and traditional framing techniques.
Ready Made Frames
Display your images, artwork and any other kind of document on a budget in a range of frame types and styles.
SPACE
Frames for Living

## Go digital

There are also digital photo frames out there if your framing needs are limited to displaying your work around the home. Look for ones with good connection options, in particular Wi-Fi or card slots, so it's easy to update your frame with your latest shots. Also make sure that the resolution is as high as possible to make the most of your mono shots. You can also display slideshows of your shots on a tablet.

### EFRAME

**eFrame is a great custom frame site as it's really easy to navigate. It has loads of guides on how to measure a print properly, how to use the website and inspirational galleries to get an idea of how a frame will look. Everything is customisable with both wood and metal frames, standard and custom size options and an online preview.**

**Custom frames**
You can create your own bespoke frame and mount using the Custom option

**Sample**
A picture can be uploaded to the site so that you can see how your image looks inside the chosen frame

**Ready made**
There's the option to pick a ready made frame if you want to keep costs down and you can buy framing accessories too

## Framing online

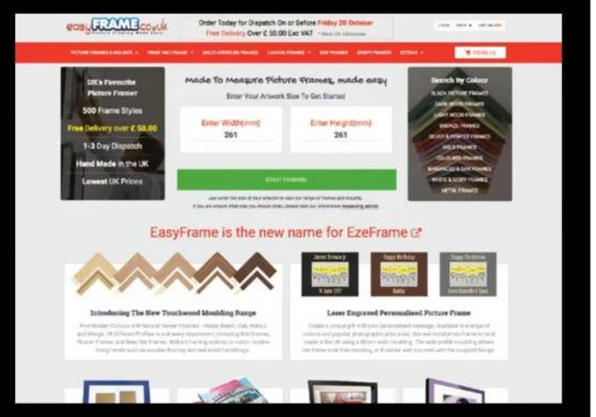
More online framing options

### PICTURE FRAMES EXPRESS

**Picture Frames Express is a simple site that stocks a range of frames, mounts and multi-frame options. As well as offering a variety of colours, there are also box frames available and wooden frames too. It's really easy to navigate around, and there's a useful help section that talks you through measuring, deciding what mount you want, how to order and more. Your frames can be delivered within 24 hours and you can currently get a 10% discount if you order 5 or more.**

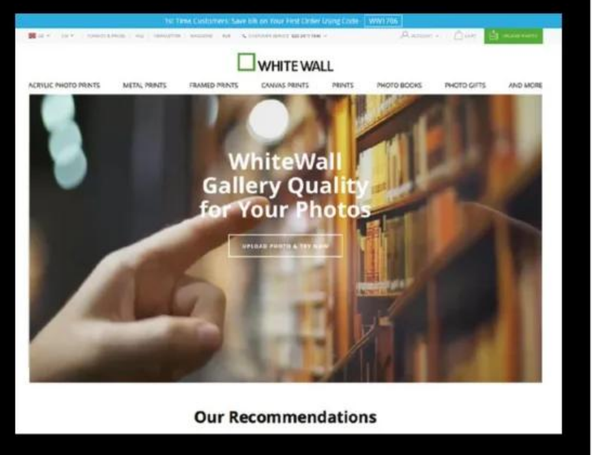
### EASYFRAME

**EasyFrame offers both standard size and custom size frames, with the latter made simple thanks to a box on the home page into which you can enter your measurements and get straight into customising. The frames are handmade in the United Kingdom and are dispatched within 1-3 days. There are plenty of categories to choose from, including metal, wood, box frames and more, and just as many mounts. There's also a Help and Advice section that covers all you need to know. Visit www.easyframe.co.uk for more details.**




### WHITEWALL

**WhiteWall offers a wide variety of framing options, alongside other products such as acrylic and canvas prints. Prices start from £24.90 (approx $40) plus shipping, at the time of writing, and you can customise your order. You have a lot of options to chose from, including the type of glass used, paper type, sizing (you can create a custom size) and more. WhiteWall ship internationally and offer a five-year guarantee. Visit www.whitewall.com for more information and to get started.**



# UPGRADE YOUR BLACK & WHITE

## Make your mono succeed like never before with our guide to the skills you need

On paper, black and white photography sounds simple; the scenes you capture are absent from the complication of colours fighting for dominance and are instead simple presentations of grey tones. However, producing successful black and white photography is far more complex. It requires an understanding of tone, contrast and the ability to view the world in black and white in order to visualise the final image. Instead of just perfecting a composition you must understand the shapes, lines and textures in a scene and how they will interact with each other once the colour has been removed.

Some people wrongly view black and white pictures as a back-up option for when colour images don't quite work. Of course, sometimes you can strike lucky and rescue an image by converting it to monochrome, but you will get far better results by shooting purposefully for black and white. This approach is also vastly more creatively fulfilling.

Black and white images often fail because there is a lack of contrast and tonal variety, which will ultimately create a very flat image. Over the next few pages, you'll learn how to select suitable subjects, enhance the texture in your shots through light and contrast and find out how the weather can improve your mono images. You'll also discover techniques for converting your imagery to black and white and which editing software works best.

*Left*
**Master mono**
Great black and white photography needs to be created purposefully, rather than using it to merely rescue a failed colour shot

© Derek Kind

**WARM COLOURS**
The orange and red tones in the colour original are very appealing and these will be lost in a mono converstion – some subjects are best left in their colour state

**SIMILAR TONES**
The separation of tones in black and white isn't ideal, with much of the scene equating to a mid-grey

© Martin Dietrich

**DISTRACTIONS**
This is quite a complex scene, with no one clear focal point. These competing elements are easier on the eye in mono

**BLAND COLOUR**
The pastel tones in this scene are not overly appealing – it's the strong shapes and lines that appeal most. Removing the colour will emphasise these key elements

**BOLD PATTERNS**
The patterns found in the structures are much clearer in the black and white version without the distraction of colour

# SELECT SUITABLE SUBJECTS

## A look at what you need to consider when selecting a scene to shoot in black and white

Selecting a suitable subject and focus for your black and white captures can be trickier than when shooting for colour. In order to succeed with your black and white photography you must learn to look at the world in tones of grey and well as shape, form and texture. There is no colour, so it is all about the power of the composition when it comes to achieving striking shots.

Professional photographer Luke Tscharke (luketscharke.com) says, "When shooting with a black and white image in mind there will be a greater focus on the light, textures and patterns in the image rather than the colours. One could say that colour is a distraction, and shooting in black and white means you are more focused on the composition of the subject in the frame."

There needs to be a tonal variation between the subject and background, and the objects and shapes must present a range of contrasting tones in order to distinguish all of the elements from each other.

The light present in your chosen scene will have a huge impact on the tones and contrast, so it is as important as ever to be aware of how the light will behave.

"[You can select] generally any subject that doesn't need colour to trigger emotions, to be honest," explains professional shooter Martin Dietrich (martindietrichphotography.de) when asked how to capture powerful imagery without colour. "There's almost no subject that isn't made for black and white photography. Even flowers can be presented in black and white if you aim for a more abstract and minimal approach to it. I always find that subjects with a certain abstract, minimalistic and geometrical nature work best in black and white. I think that including strong leading lines, shapes and strong natural contrasts adds a lot to the result."

Professional photographer John Kosmopoulos (silverzenphotography.com) says, "Black and white photography is all about your ability to finesse a compositional harmony of tonal values as a whole in your image. It is also about isolating and contrasting the impact of elements and subjects in the frame."

### SHOOT IN MONO MODE

By using your camera's monochrome picture style setting, your captures will be previewed in black and white on the review screen.

When choosing your subject it is also important to pay close attention to the colours. The colours in a scene may be beautiful, but if they correspond to very similar shades of grey once converted to mono, the image will look very flat and dull. For example, a scene made up of reds and greens might look very striking in colour, but when it is converted the tones will be too similar and will create a very uninteresting image.

For a black and white capture to work, the tones present must be fairly distinctive and contrasting in order to allow the viewer to understand the scene or subject.

Creating a sense of depth is a great way of producing striking black and white imagery, so look out for lead-in lines that will pull the viewer in and enhance the perspective. Architectural subjects, for example, work particularly well in black and white due to the prominent lines and shapes found in their structures.

When it comes to black and white landscape photography, composition is absolutely vital because there are no colours to pull the viewer into the scene. Instead, look for roads, paths and leading lines in the landscape and make use of the foreground, and be sure you have a strong focal point in your shot to anchor the image.

Black and white portraits are popular, and can sometimes be far more intriguing and beguiling than a simple colour shot. The absence of colour means that all of the focus will be entirely on the person, their character and expression. Faces with a lot of texture look particularly striking in black and white. Use side lighting for your black and white portraits as this will help create a strong contrast between the highlights and shadows – avoid lighting that removes all of the shadows as this will create a very flat image.

"It is all about focus," explains Alexandre Manuel (alexandrephotography.com). "A black and white picture is not just a colour shot that we have desaturated, it is a picture where the composition and the balance of the components are very important."

©Alex Manuel

**Contrast**
Contrasting tones are really important for creating striking black and white captures, as they help to separate elements as well as enhance the texture captured.

© Luke Tscharke

**Texture**
"Textures become more pronounced, crisp and almost touchable when transformed into black and white, so that is something I always keep in mind," explains Luana Sambugaro (**luanasamphotography.com**).

© Martin Dietrich

**Pattern**
Add interest to your captures by focusing on patterns. Colour often distracts the eye away from patterns, so removing the colour helps to draw the attention and emphasise recurring shapes.

© John Kosmopoulos

**Shape**
Man-made structures with bold shapes and lines make great subjects for striking black and white photography.

© Luana Sambugaro

**HIGH-KEY**

Many portrait and landscape photographers opt for a predominantly bright look

# PERFECT A STYLE

## Create professional-looking images by opting to work with a high or low-key effect

The most successful professional black and white photography can usually be described as either being high-key or low-key. A high-key image tends to be made up of mainly highlights and bright tones whereas a low-key image will have more blacks and darker tones.

High-key and low-key images are usually made up of very contrasting and striking tones and tend not to contain many midtones. This means that generally the images produced are beautifully simple while maintaining a very sophisticated high-end look.

Professional black and white photographers tend to steer away from too many murky midtones and stick to very contrasting blacks and whites. Choosing to create a high or low-key image is a way of further stripping back the scene and ensures that all of the focus is on the subject.

In order to create a high-key look you should seek out naturally light-coloured scenes that can be contrasted against darker objects. You might have to use an exposure compensation of +1 or more in order to ensure that the bright areas look white as opposed to an unattractive grey, while also ensuring that you don't overexpose the midtones that you want to keep.

Low-key images are conventionally very dark and consist of dark areas split up with bright highlights. In low-key images where the majority of the frame is made up of dark tones, the viewer will be drawn to the small elements of white, which often form the subject or focal point. High-key images are the opposite and are often associated with abstract photography where scenes with minimal detail are favoured.

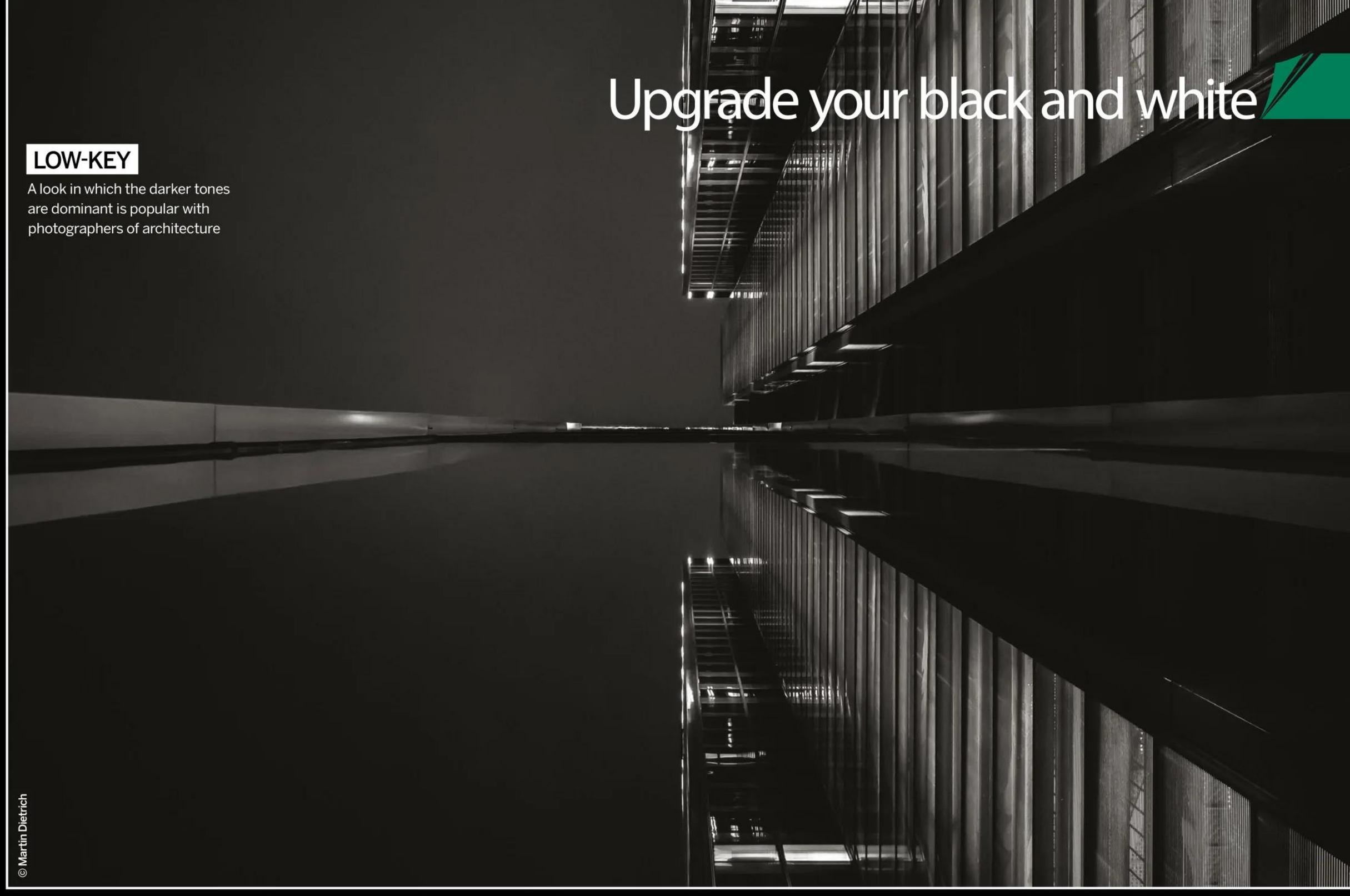
High-key and low-key black and white images are usually both made up of highly contrasting tones, and this means that patterns and texture often become far more striking and prominent in the frame. Compositions are usually far cleaner and much more slick, which is why this style is often embraced by the professionals.

© Alex Manuel

# Upgrade your black and white

**LOW-KEY**

A look in which the darker tones are dominant is popular with photographers of architecture

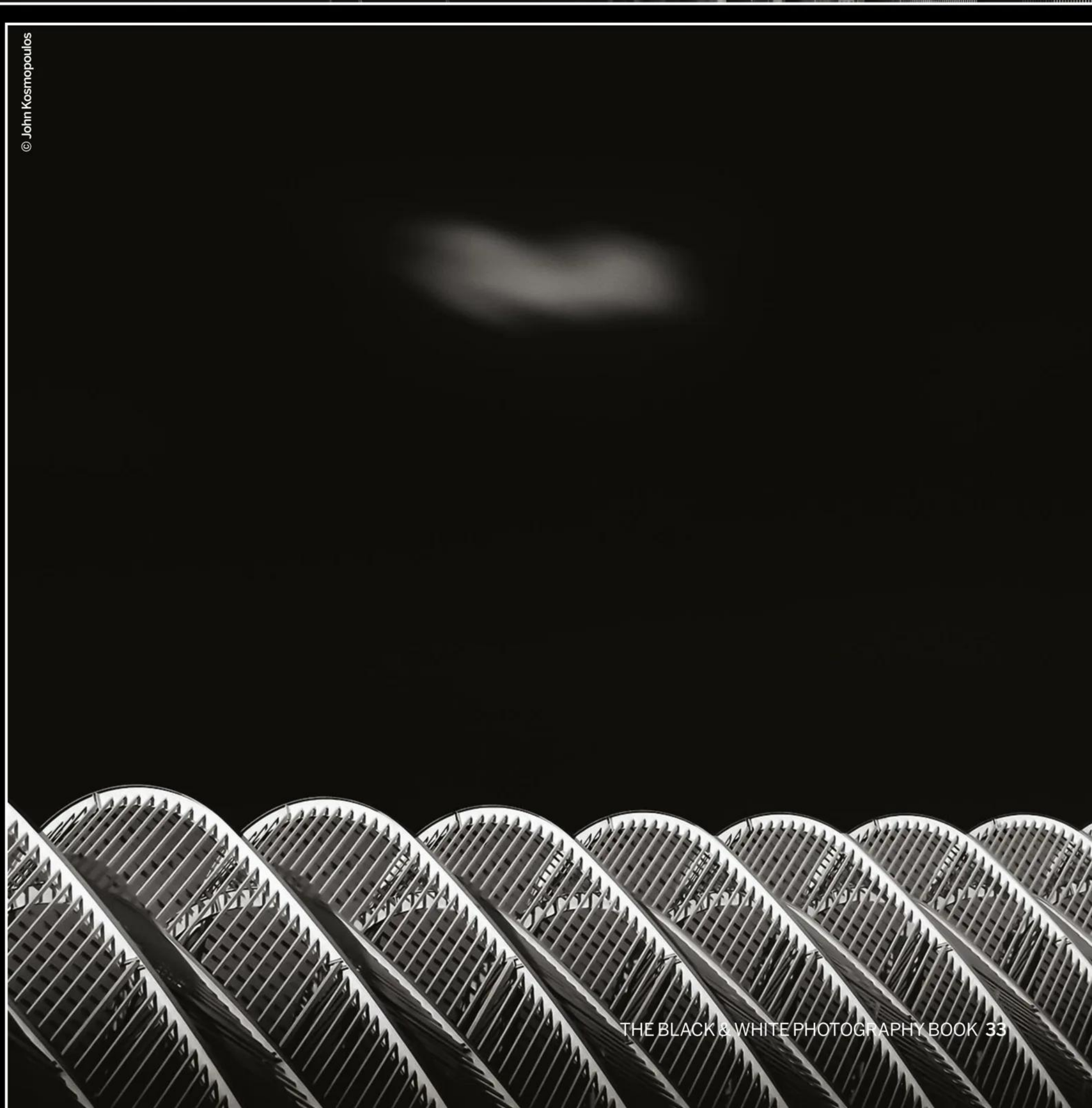


© Martin Dietrich

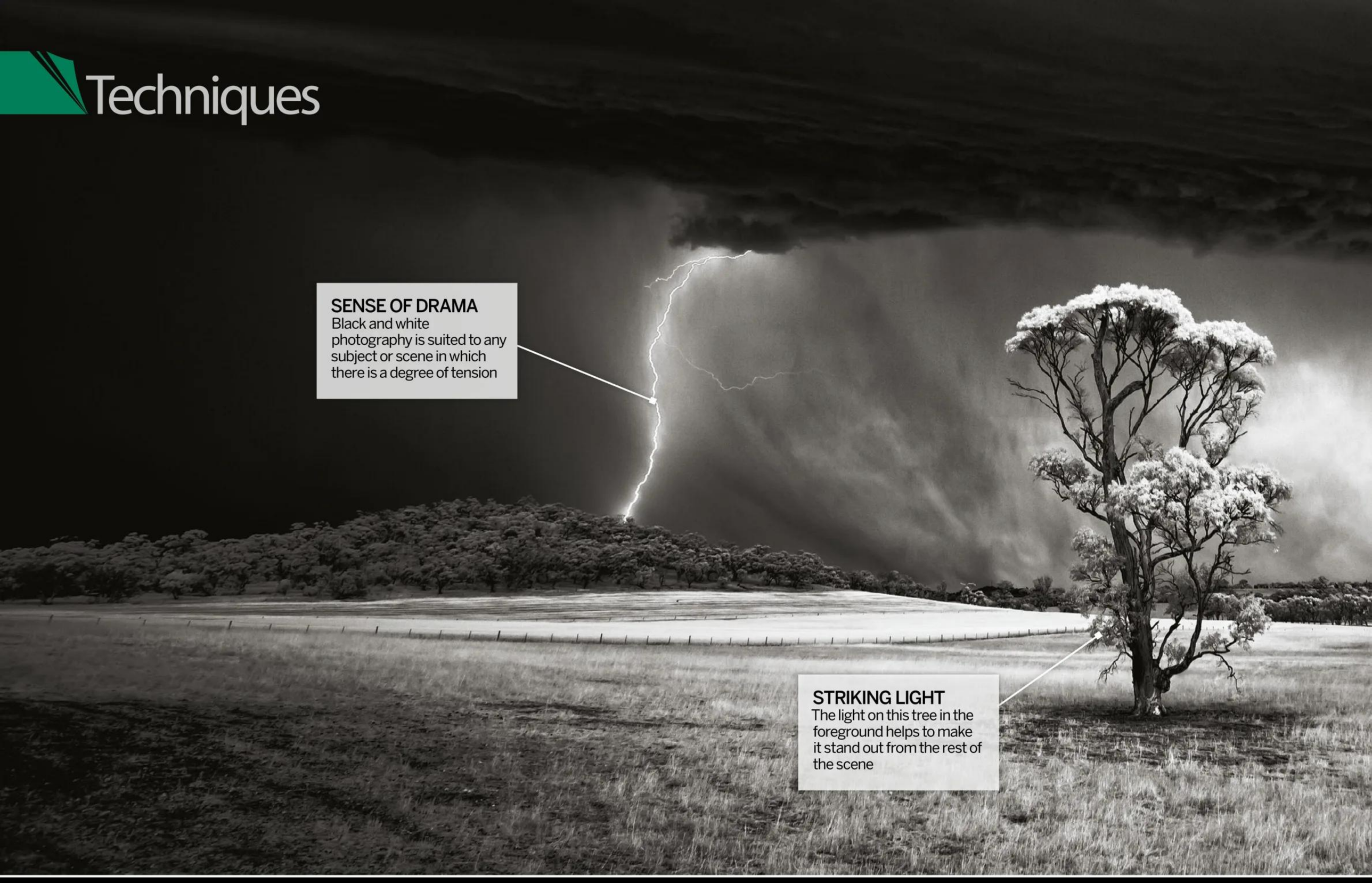
## Middle of the road

### A mid-key mono image can sometimes be a little bland

Often, it is these black and white images that look as though they have been quickly converted from colour as an afterthought. This is why your choice of scene is so important for monochrome work, but your exposure and image processing techniques also have a vital role to play in creating black and white photos that look like they were always intended for mono.



© John Kosmopoulos


SENSE OF DRAMA
Black and white photography is suited to any subject or scene in which there is a degree of tension
STRIKING LIGHT
The light on this tree in the foreground helps to make it stand out from the rest of the scene

# EMBRACE THE ELEMENTS

## Discover how different weather conditions can enhance and add more interest to your black and white photography

The weather can have a huge impact on the photographs that you produce, so it is important to know how to embrace the conditions in order to determine the mood and atmosphere captured in your black and white shots.

As already discussed, the very best black and white imagery needs to embrace contrast, tones and the light – and different weather conditions can be used to enhance this. A body of water, fog, mist and haze all have the ability to reduce the contrast of a scene and create a more ethereal high-key feel. It can create an eerie stillness that is perfect for simple, stark black and white photography. In a similar way, a dark and stormy sky can be used to create a more low-key dramatic atmosphere. A stormy or cloudy sky is great for adding interesting textures to your imagery and a clear, bright sky is ideal for a more abstract, high-key look.

The position and strength of the Sun will have a huge effect on your black and white captures and the quality and direction of the light will influence the amount of contrast in the scene. Black and white architectural

## Make use of bad weather

### Create more atmosphere in your black and white by using storms and mist

The weather can be used to create atmosphere and to convey emotion. Alex Manuel says, "In my opinion, for landscapes the weather is very decisive and is the main element for creating a good image."

© Pixabay

**Stormy**
Embracing a stormy and unsettled sky can add texture and drama to your shot. A stormy sky is a great way to add atmosphere to your black and white.

© Pixabay

**Mist**
Mist and fog has a completely opposite effect to a stormy sky and can reduce the contrast, creating a more ethereal, eerie atmosphere.

© Luke Tscharke

photographers often choose to work in the early morning or evening when the Sun is lower and the light is more directional. "If you have dramatic light hitting your subject, this can make the difference between an average photograph and an excellent one," explains Tscharke. "And if your scene has strong contrasts between the black and white tones it provides much more impact. The light in the scene can help a lot with this aspect too.

"I feel that great black and white images can be made in all conditions if you look hard enough," says Tscharke. "For my infrared black and white images I am often looking for a bright, sunny day with high clouds in the sky. Conversely, days that are dark and overcast can lead to dramatic and moody images, which is especially heightened if a shaft of light can break through the clouds and illuminate the scene. I certainly prefer the presence of clouds that add interest to the sky and landscape."

Kosmopoulos explains that, "Overcast days can be especially appealing and inspiring as they tend to soften the light that falls on objects and offer a moodier illumination of subjects and the overall scene. Both conventional and long-exposure photography can benefit from such weather." When it comes to portrait and fashion photography Sambugaro prefers an overcast day too, and says, "Nothing is stronger and more emotional than a model on the beach with a long black dress, crashing ocean waves and clouds on the horizon."

As well as shooting architecture when the Sun is low, Dietrich says, "I love shooting in urban surroundings at night where the city lights can create great contrasts. I even prefer when it rains, because the reflecting light grants even more contrasts for any given subject."

*Above*
**Barbossa bolt**
Tscharke has created a very atmospheric and dramatic image. The contrasting tones really bring out the texture in the sky and the piercing lightning bolt draws the viewer in

## Use the light

### Discover how the angle of the Sun will affect your black and white captures

Learning what impact the Sun will have on your black and white captures is key. If the Sun is directly behind you then you'll end up with a rather flat image, but simply moving your shooting position can have a huge impact. Shooting in the morning or near sunset when the Sun is lower will create an attractive side light, which is perfect for enhancing texture for black and white captures. Low-angled light helps to define form and creates interesting shadows, and direct sunlight creates hard shadows and strong contrast.

© Luke Tscharke

**Back-lighting**
Shooting with the Sun behind your subject is perfect for creating a high-contrast shot with shadows and definition.

© Martin Dietrich

**Side-lighting**
Architectural photographers often choose to shoot when the Sun is low in the sky in order to enhance the texture and lines in the buildings.

**Frontal lighting**
Here the Sun was behind the photographer, which means that the image looks a little flat in black and white.

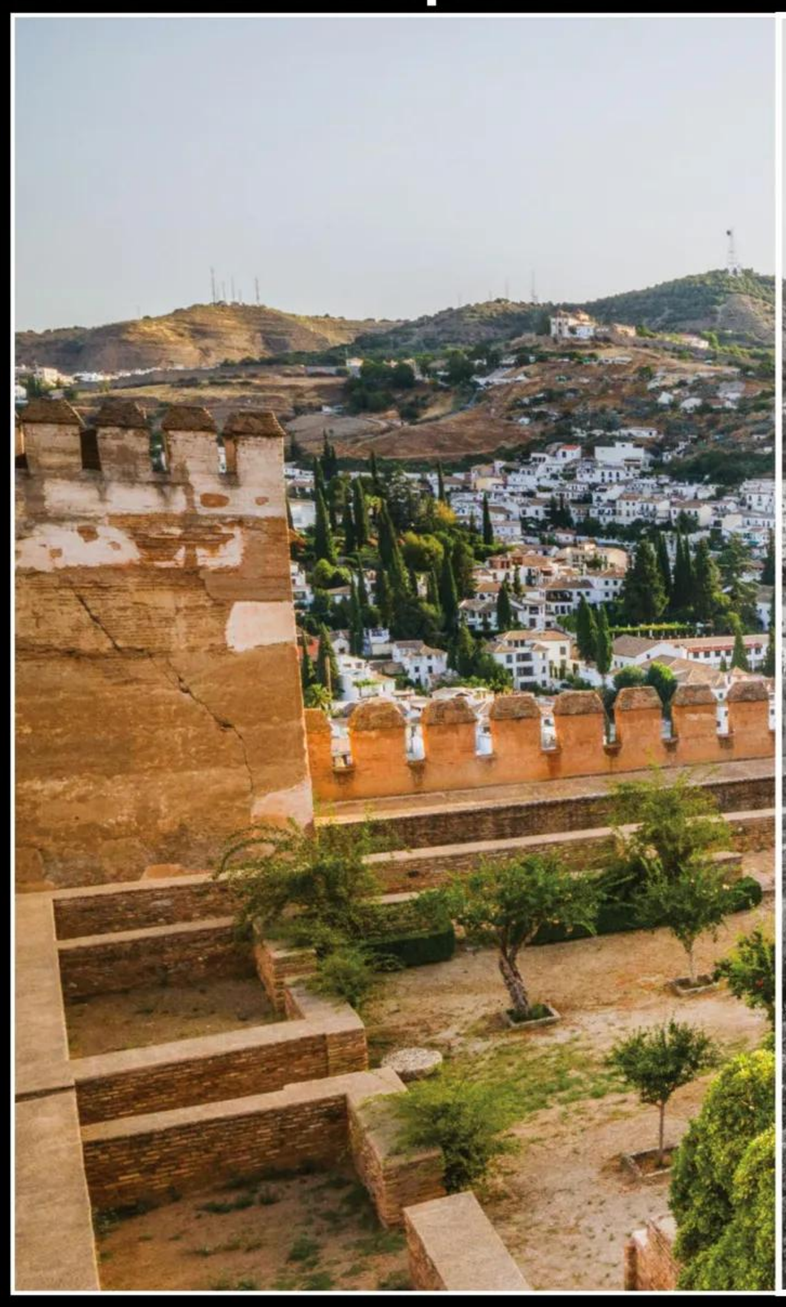
# EDIT MONO MASTERPIECES

## Post-capture work is an essential component of successful black and white photography

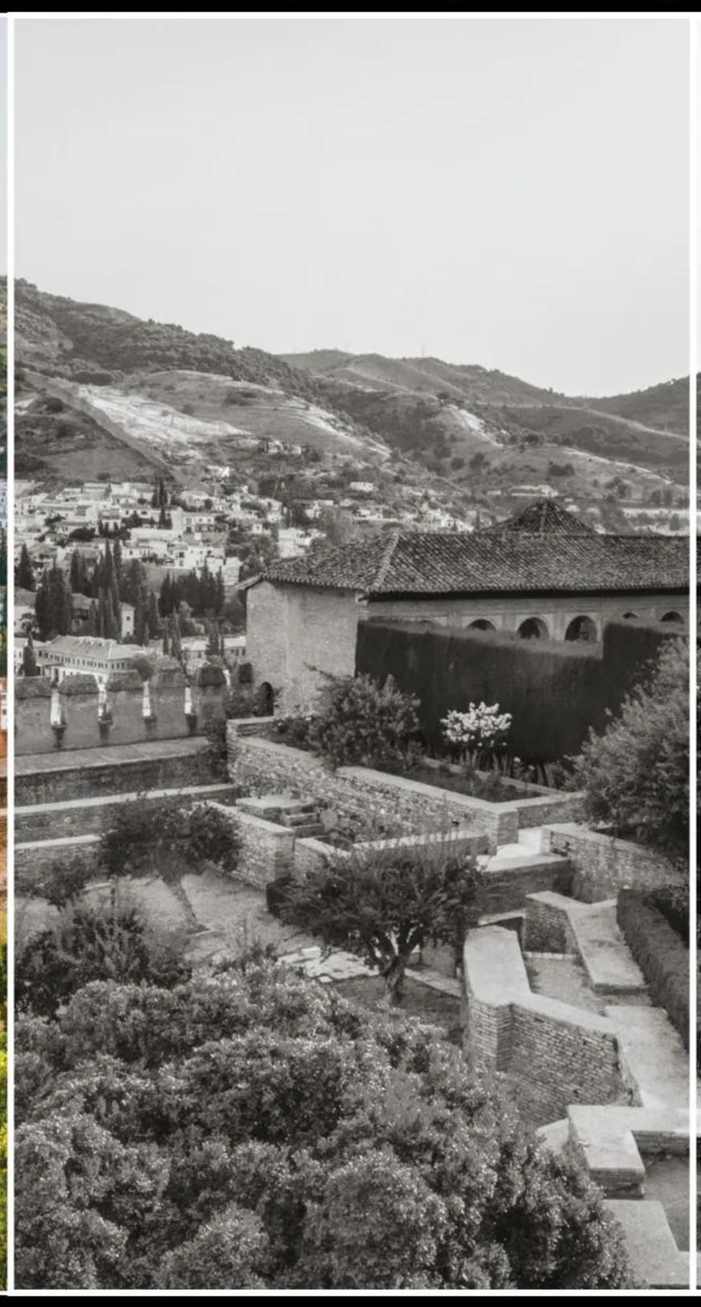
There is more to creating a striking black and white image than doing a simple desaturation – it is very easy to tell the difference between a quick, thoughtless conversion and one that time has been spent on.

There a number of ways to convert your images to black and white; the most basic way would be to do it in camera, however we'd recommend that you shoot in colour and RAW in order to maximise the amount of image information available to you, then spend time in post perfecting the tones. Avoid simply converting the image to Grayscale in Photoshop because the results will be very flat, and this is also a destructive edit that simply

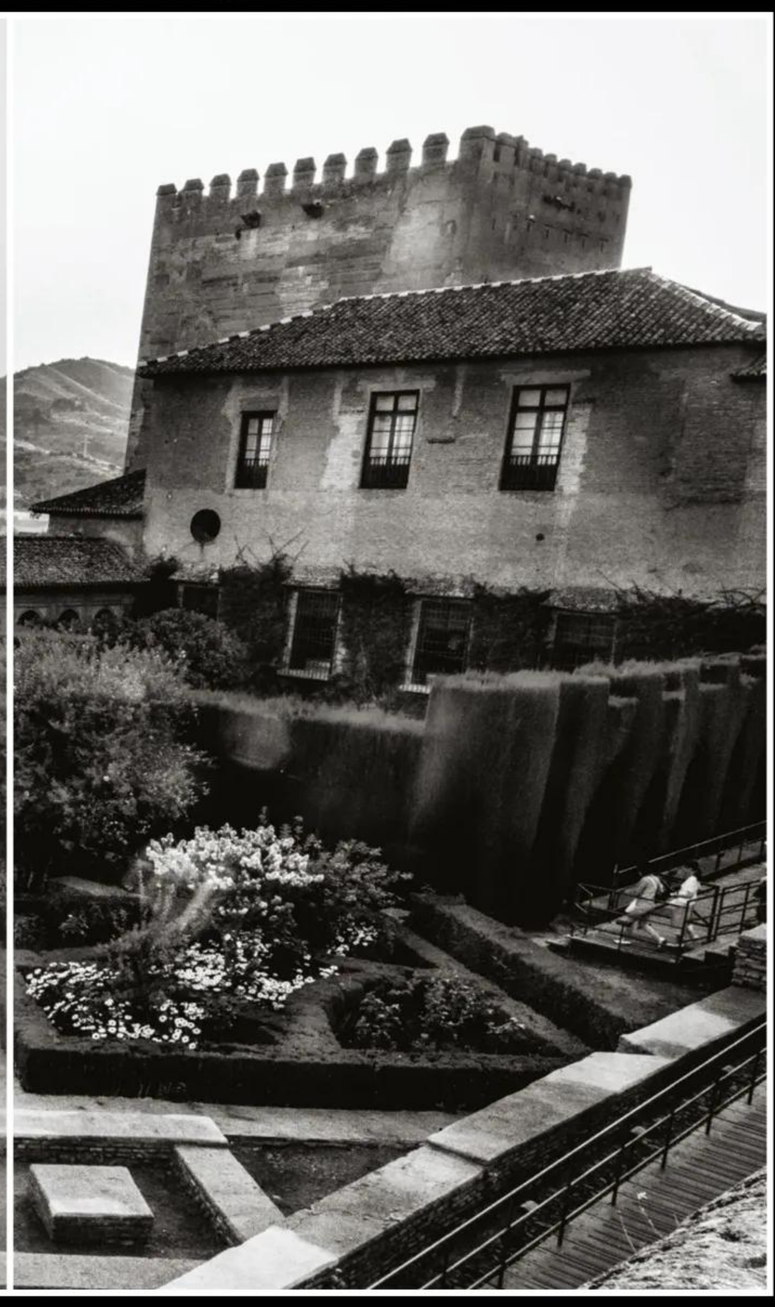
## Process with precision Discover how important your editing work is for great mono



**Colour original**
The contrasting tones in the colours and textures in this image make it ideal to convert to black and white.



**Desaturation**
This is a quick way to convert to black and white, however this image now lacks depth and texture.



**Careful conversion**
By taking more time over the conversion we have been able to enhance the texture and contrast, creating more depth and interest.

removes all colour. Instead you should opt for a non-destructive adjustment layer to make the conversion – you'll have far more control over the tones and contrast in your image and you can always revert back to the original file if you wish.

"In Photoshop there are so many ways to convert a picture into black and white that you can spend weeks learning them all," explains Sambugaro. "I usually go with the easy way, the Black & White adjustment button, but even that really isn't all that easy. It should be approached similarly to the normal editing process, in creating multiple adjustments, levels and selective colour adjustments to make a striking image."

Lightroom has a few good black and white presets and the simple black and white conversion option is usually pretty good, but Silver Efex Pro takes the conversion to another level. The Nik Collection plug-in has 38 impressive presets for black and white conversion as well as a range of intuitive tools. Both Tscharke and Manuel often use Silver Efex Pro, thanks to its intuitive and easy-to-use functionality.

## Consider plug-ins

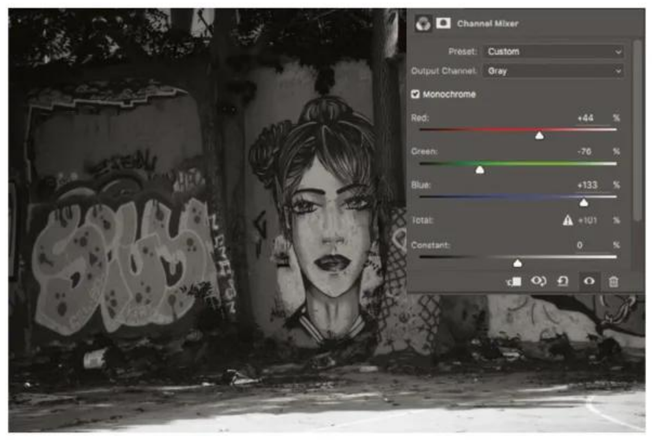
### Enhance your mono results with dedicated black and white photo applications

Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 and Macphun Tonality are both plug-ins that can work with your chosen photo-editing software and give you far more control over your black and white conversions. Macphun Tonality only works with Macs so won't be for everyone, however, it offers more presets than Silver Efex Pro 2 as well as Layers.

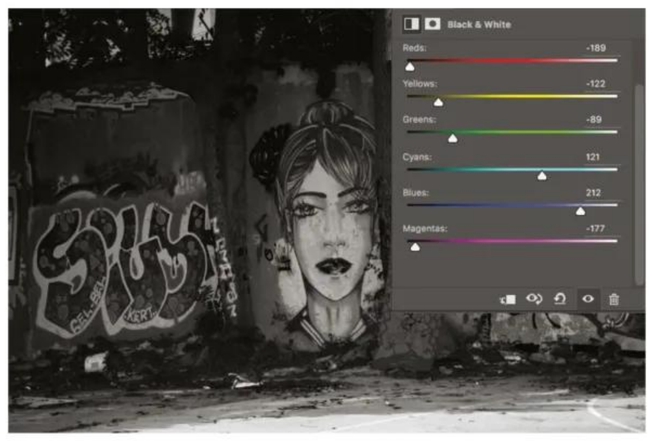
Both are dedicated to black and white imagery so offer tools and control that go further than programs like Photoshop and Lightroom. Good black and white imagery will usually include an element of texture and Silver Efex Pro 2 has tools that help define this far better than Photoshop and Lightroom. It has four sliders for adjusting contrast – a simple Contrast slider similar to the one in Lightroom, Amplify Whites and Amplify Blacks sliders that let you increase the contrast in highlights and shadows, and Soft Contrast to increase contrast less aggressively. The structure slider is similar to Clarity in Lightroom, but instead of affecting all tones you can choose to adjust structure independently in the shadows, midtones and highlights.

## Convert in Photoshop

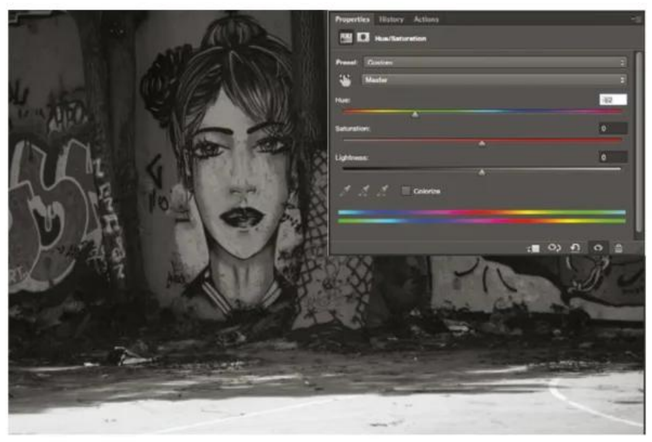
### This popular program has plenty of choice on offer




**Channel Mixer adjustment layer**
This enables you to adjust the RGB values in your image to alter the tones of grey. If you want to maintain the current exposure, all of the values must add up to 100 – to darken make the number less and to lighten it make it higher than 100. Go to Layer>Adjustment layer>Channel Mixer and tick Monochrome.




**Black & White adjustment layer**
This conversion method is relatively straightforward to use. Go to Layer> Adjustment Layer>Black & White. From here you can adjust the individual colour tones from the original to be darker or lighter in order to create more tonal contrast. This gives you a great amount of control.




**Hue/Saturation adjustment layers**
Once you have created a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and desaturated the image, you can create a second Hue/ Saturation adjustment layer beneath the first, set it to Colour blend mode and adjust the Hue slider to give the image more tonal variety and interest.

*Opposite-top*
**Piercing eyes**
Pro photographer Franck Lods (**fl-photostudio.fr**) shot this striking image. The deep tones really make the model's eyes stand out

*Below*
**Histogram help**
Pay attention to this while converting to mono, but put the visual effect you're after first

© Stanislav Puchkovsky

# Top 10 mono secrets

## Discover the key ingredients of the best mono photography and improve your own colourless captures today

**It's a shame that black and white is often only considered as an editing technique.** Of course, it's inevitable that black-and-white images are often going to first be recognised as such in post-production, and this approach may work just fine – you're looking through a recent set of images and you sense that something you've captured would probably look good in black and white, so you take the Saturation slider down to see if you're right.

Some photographers even select a whole set of images and preview them in mono to see if any of the photos have black-and-white potential. Again, this can work quite well, but neither approach is quite as good as setting out to capture a great black-and-white shot in the first place. This is because there are specific elements that help to create great mono photos, which you'll be better placed to capture if you're conscious of them while you have a camera in your hand.

By giving black and white the respect it deserves, you'll be rewarded with a much greater success rate and elevate your images to a higher level. The worst approach to black and white is to view it as a way of rescuing colour shots that didn't work.

Over the next few pages, you'll discover the lighting, subject matter, composition and exposure decisions that the best black-and-white photographers make whenever they are in the field, or in the studio, to create professional-quality images that look like so much more than an afterthought. You'll also learn some of the key RAW editing techniques that can help to make the most of a great black-and-white capture.

**A SENSE OF DRAMA**
Black-and-white photography lends itself extremely well to emotive and evocative portraiture

## Underexpose for moody black and whites

If you want to create dramatic black-and-white images, one technique is to try is to expose for the highlights and allow many of the shadow areas within the image to block up. This is a situation when it's best to ignore what your histogram is telling you, as a quick glance at your camera's rear LCD screen will almost certainly tell you that you've incorrectly exposed the image, but if this is the effect that you are trying to achieve then there's nothing wrong with the exposure at all.

If you have pre-visualised this effect in the field, there's absolutely no reason not to switch your camera into Aperture Priority and spot metering mode and then meter from the highlights in order to make the camera choose a faster shutter speed. Alternatively, you could simply use your exposure compensation dial or shoot in full manual mode. Like many imaging effects, it's possible to wait until the processing stage to create this look, but black-and-white photography should be shot as purposefully as possible.

**MOODY MONO**
Photographer Frodi Brinks (**www.frodibrinks.com**) deliberately underexposes the shadow areas of his images for atmosphere

© Frodi Brinks

© Frodi Brinks

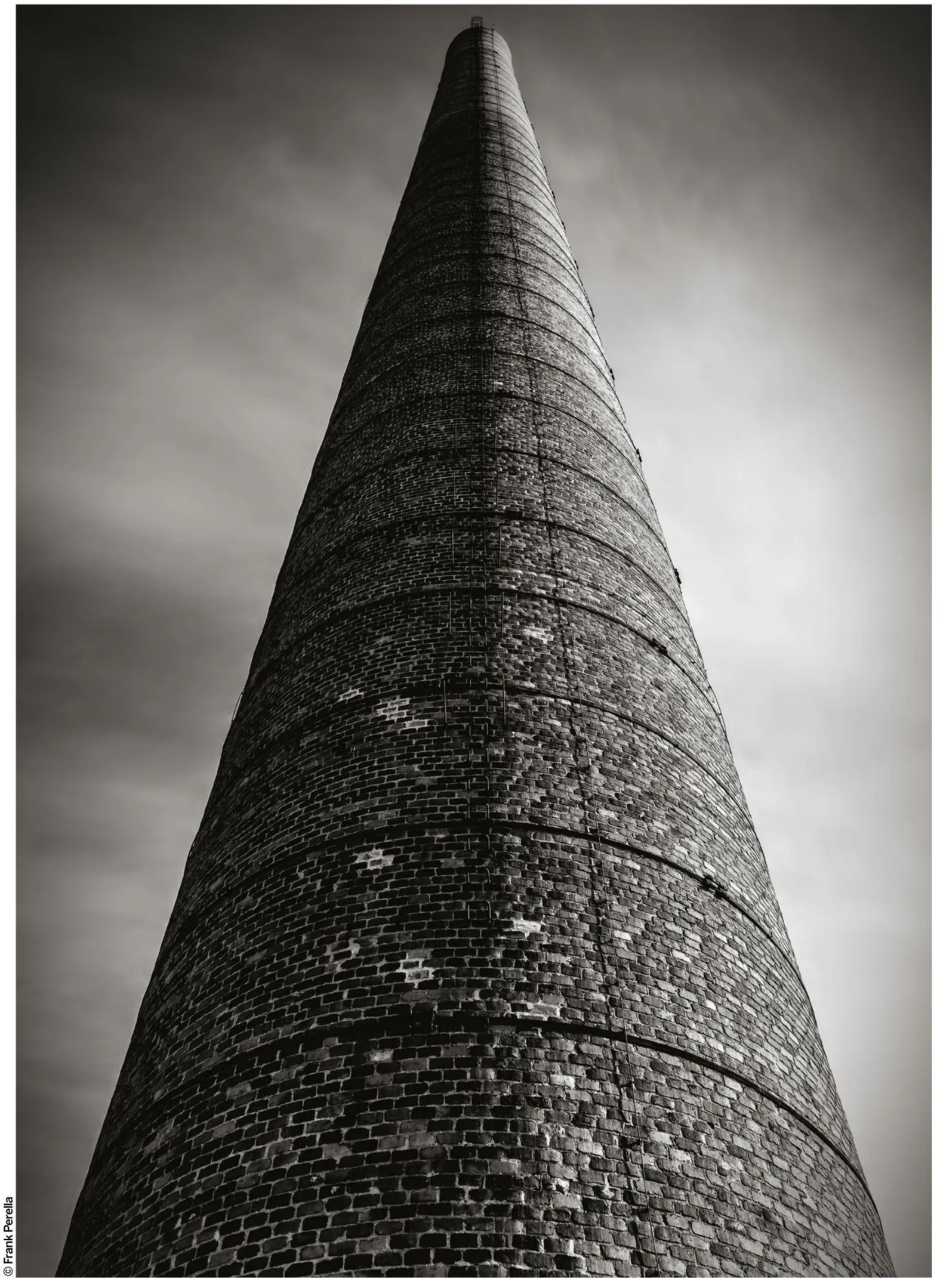
# Use side lighting to emphasise texture

When colour is taken out of the equation, other elements become so much more important. If you are presented with a full-colour photograph of a stunning sunrise or sunset, it is often the colour itself that gives the image impact. Other elements play their part, of course, but they are not as vital to the success of the image when a full-colour palette is present.

When a scene or subject is presented in black and white, the brain is forced to decode and interpret what the eyes are seeing differently. Our understanding of what things are and are not is based very much on colour, so elements of the scene that are normally processed and understood subconsciously suddenly become much more noticeable.

The best black-and-white images succeed because they make a feature of the elements that the eyes and brain only notice when colour is taken away. Texture is an example of this. Without colour to instruct the brain on how to interpret the image, texture provides vital information, and you can emphasise textural detail by using side lighting in your black-and-white photography. When the light is hitting your subject from an angle of around 45 to 90 degrees, you'll notice that textural detail is much more distinct than it is when the light is coming from any other angle.

Monochrome shooter Lee Acaster (**www.leeacaster.com**) says, "I love an image with an element of drama to it, and side lighting is one of the best ways of achieving this… When the sun is low in the sky, textures and shapes become more defined, adding depth to the scene." Photographer Frank Perella (**www.frankperella.com**) agrees."Strong side lighting creates side shadows and powerful contrasts that work particularly well for portraiture and architectural photography by pulling the viewer's eyes through the darker shadow areas and along to the lighter subject details," he says, "It's the strong contrasts between light and shadow areas that create definition of shape and texture within the frame."



© Frank Perella

**SIDE LIGHTING FOR TEXTURE**

Texture is an important element in many successful black-and-white photographs. Side lighting is ideal for emphasising textural detail

## SAVE EDITING TIME

Capturing your black-and-white images in the right sort of lighting conditions will ensure that you do not have to spend nearly as long in Photoshop later on.

© Lee Acaster

© Daniele Bonanni

# Capture shape and form with lighting

You can use side lighting or backlighting, or even a combination of the two, to emphasise shape and form in studio photography, an approach that works really well with still life, fine art and nude portrait photography.

One approach is to create a rim-light effect using backlighting alone, with a light source positioned directly behind the subject. Another is to position a light at about 135 degrees from the camera, with a second light sometimes positioned on the other side of the subject, depending on the effect that's being created. With one or two studio lights positioned at 135 degrees from the camera, and effectively pointing back towards the camera, there is a risk of flare, just as there is when shooting into the Sun in the field. Many photographers therefore position flags – often made simply of black foam or card – just in front of each light and between the camera and the subject in order to prevent this from becoming problematic.

**CAPTURE SHAPE AND FORM**
Black and white is an ideal medium for capturing the shapes and form of nude subjects, especially when captured with carefully positioned lights, as photographer Daniele Bonanni (**www.danielebonanni29.wix.com/danielebonanniphoto**) has done in this image

# Exploit patterns, shapes and repetition

One of the benefits of black-and-white photography is that it lends itself to environments in which you might otherwise dismiss. Urban environments, with their abundance of diverse architecture, are often best captured in black and white – it's simply a case of knowing what to look for.

Photographer Paulo Abrantes (**www.branded.me/paulo-abrantes**) says, "For my approach, the better way to look at a composition… Is to wonder how a seven or eight-year-old child would draw that particular frame on paper. Of course, the brain at that age [reduces] the world to the basic lines and shapes… And seeing the world like that again is a powerful tool for the photographer."

However, Abrantes advises that photographers mustn't assume that simply identifying a pattern in their surroundings and photographing it will result in a great photo. "Patterns are great to include in a frame and to compose with. The danger is that [often] we end up with a composition just about patterns when we wanted to show something else."

Abrantes asks himself a series of questions while he's shooting patterns in order to get the composition right. "What kind of patterns do I have? Do they make a specific visual rhythm? Is there something breaking that rhythm or is just a non-stop one? If the pattern is broken, can I take advantage of it, for a division of the frame?… Do they lead my eyes to some specific place in the composition?… These are major questions to consider about patterns in a composition and I always try to answer them in the location for my geometric compositions." If you consider some of these questions before you shoot, your chances of creating successful, impacting images are much greater.

Roland Shainidze (**www.500px.com/roliketto**) explains that full daylight is often best for this sort of photography. "If you want strong black-and-white images, try to shoot in daylight when the Sun is powerful enough to create strong highlights and shadows".

© Paulo Abrantes

**PATTERNS AND SHAPES**
Look out for appealing patterns and shapes – particularly unusual or repetitious ones – for your mono captures

**LOOK UPWARDS**
When shooting in urban areas, try looking upwards at the tops of city buildings with the sky beyond. Converging verticals and reflective surfaces are ideal subjects for monochrome, particularly those showing dramatic skies.

© Roland Shainidze

# Separate the subject from the background

This secret is, in many ways, an extension of the previous secret. It's important to be able to visualise how a shot will look when it's converted to black and white so that the subject and the background don't simply blend tediously into indistinct shades of grey.

While, to an extent, judicious image editing can go some way towards improving the situation, the very best black-and-white images generally don't suffer from this problem in the first place. If you are struggling to create tonal separation, one potential solution is to produce a shallow depth of field by using a wide aperture, so that the subject stands out from the background in terms of sharpness.

**STANDOUT SUBJECT**
It's important that the subject is clearly separated, tonally, from the background in black-and-white photography

**BLACK-AND-WHITE TONES**
Once converted to black and white, the flower is no longer satisfactorily separated from its background, creating a cluttered, visually confusing effect

LACK OF SEPARATION

© Bruno Birkhofer

**CLEAR, BLUE SKIES**
This scene looks great in full colour. The vivid blue sky is actually very appealing and contrasts well with the yellow tones on the ground

**CONVERTED TO MONO**
When presented in black and white, this scene doesn't look nearly as attractive. The vividly blue sky appears bland when formed merely of a limited range of grey tones

**MONO CONDITIONS**
Dull and overcast weather, particularly if there is fog or mist, is often the best time for mono images

# Learn to see in black and white

The best black-and-white photographers know exactly how each element of the scene, and each colour, is going to translate into shades of grey. This is one of the key reasons why some subjects simply do not work when presented in mono, and some scenes work better in black and white than they do in colour. Blue skies are one of the biggest offenders in this regard because they lack texture and tend to look quite flat when the colour is taken out. Stormy skies, meanwhile, can help to ensure that there is plenty of textural detail among the clouds and can also result in dramatic rays of light. Similarly, cloud coverage decreases the overall contrast in the scene and helps to ensure that a wider tonal range can be captured. Take a look at the before and after examples here for an illustration of this effect in action.

# Shoot in low-visibility

Heavily clouded-over skies or stormy conditions are often absolutely ideal for black-and-white photography. What seems dull or dreary in colour can look exceptional in shades of grey.

Low-visibility conditions can result in beautiful images. "Banks of rolling fog or mist provide an excellent subject for black-and-white landscape photography," explains Perella. "As fog and mist are often perceived as colourless, their natural ability to diffuse light into subdued, almost colourless tones, often does half the conversion for you.

The resulting diffusion naturally subdues the light into complex layers of muted tones, creating abundant atmosphere and helping define any protruding elements, such as treetops and mountain peaks. Early morning and early evening are ideal times to capture the best of this ambient light."

Lee Acaster agrees. "Black-and-white photography is often about removing the unnecessary, and simplifying an image, and fog or mist is a dream come true for achieving this… Cluttered backgrounds disappear into a pleasing monotone, and the most mundane of subjects can evoke an air of mystery when shrouded in fog. I particularly enjoy shooting woodlands in the mist, when the usually confusing mass of trees is separated into standalone forms."

**SHADES OF GREY**
Make use of the subdued tones that nature provides on the dullest of days for interesting, dark and mysterious black-and-white imagery. The clouds and mist act as giant diffusers creating an atmospheric, intriguing image.

© Lee Acaster

# Use back lighting to create long shadows

Images often work well in black and white when there are plenty of strong, distinctive shapes. Shooting towards the Sun creates both silhouetting and strong vertical shadows stretching back towards the camera.

"Using a strong source of back lighting in black-and-white photography is a powerful way of defining shape and contours," explains Perella. "It's a bold technique and special care needs to be taken in positioning the light to ensure that the desired level is achieved. Some photographs may require striking, bold silhouettes where no detail other than the strong outline is the desired effect. In other cases, a softer, more diffused backlight allows some light to wrap around the subject, providing softer, more defined subjects in silhouette."

© Frank Perella

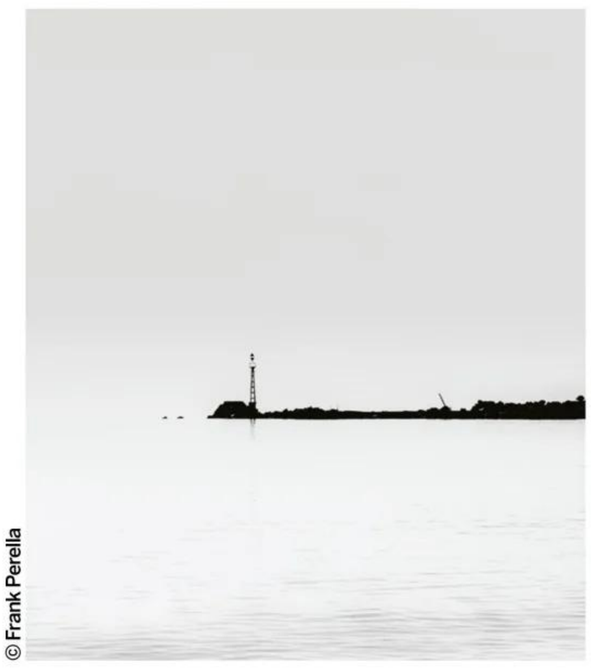
**LONG SHADOWS**
When the light is coming from behind your subject, long shadows are cast, which can look very dramatic in monochrome

# Shoot simple scenes

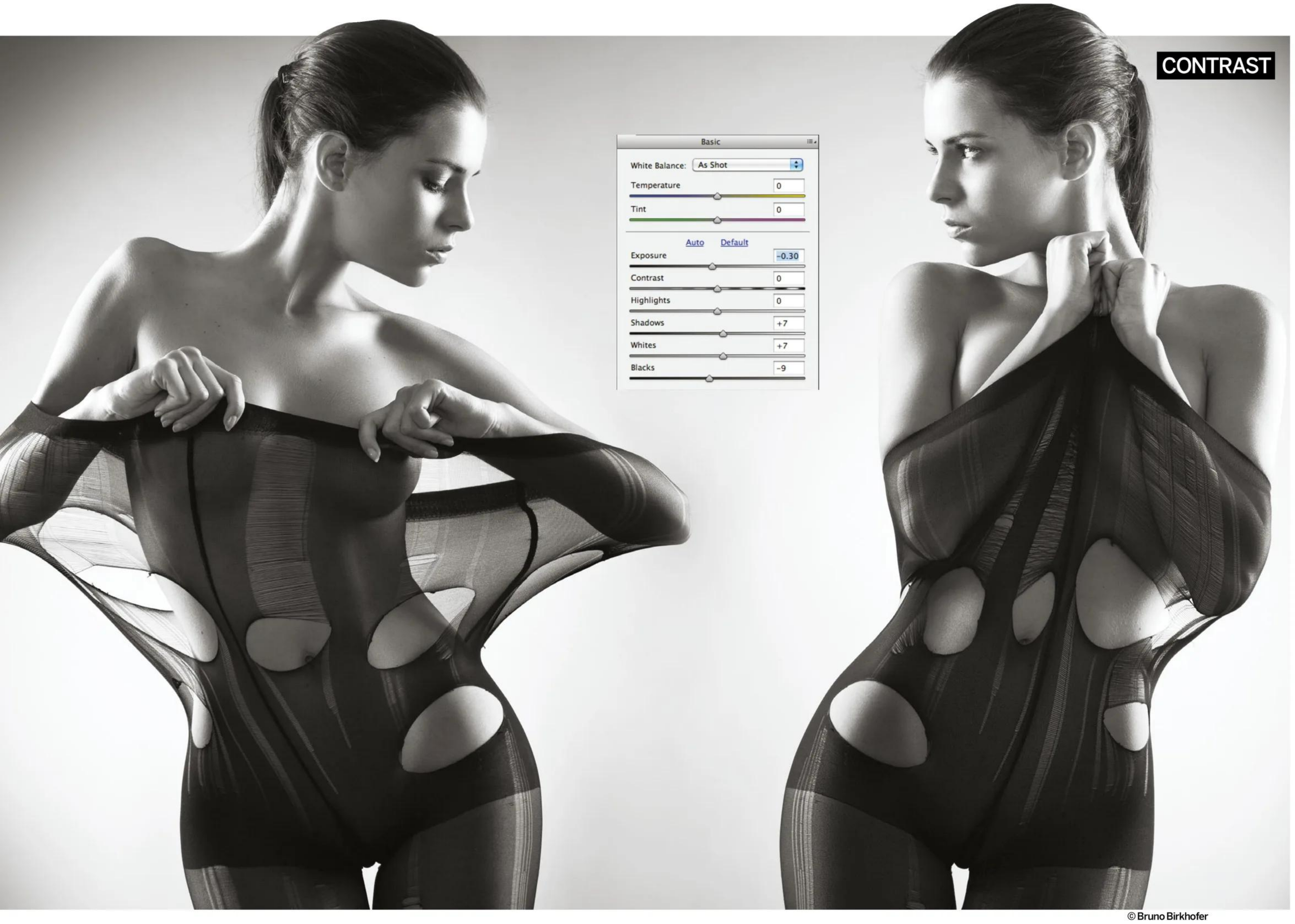
Taking a minimalist approach to compositions can work well in colour photography, but it's particularly effective when you're shooting in monochrome. Look for scenes with very few elements, in which the main focal point is not competing with any other distraction and also consider accentuating the effect by using a long exposure to blur water and clouds. Cropping the image in post-production is another technique used by black-and-white photographers to simplify the composition.

© Frank Perella

© Frank Perella



**MINIMALIST MONO**
Black and white is ideally suited to scenes with just one main focal point and plenty of relatively negative space




© Bruno Birkhofer

# Master RAW editing

Getting your black-and-white shots right in-camera is very important, but editing is also an integral part of monochrome photography.

This is why it's extremely important to shoot in your camera's RAW format, enabling you to take full advantage of the adjustments offered by Camera Raw. As with traditional darkroom printing, contrast is perhaps the single most important concern. "In black-and-white photography, contrast is very important," says Bruno Birkhofer (**www.bruno-birkhofer.ch**). "Too little contrast makes black-and-white images flat and lose their brilliance. In [the] studio, I [prefer to] set the lights with lots of shadows. If I am out in nature and cannot change the light, I often have to push contrast in Photoshop and often do it up to the limits."

In Camera Raw, you can boost contrast not only with the main Contrast slider, but also by using the Blacks, Whites, Shadows and Highlights sliders. Another area to pay attention to is local contrast. Camera Raw has a Clarity slider that enables you to boost (or reduce) the local contrast, which can have a significant impact on your final images.

### EMPHASISE CONTRAST

Black-and-white images are often at their strongest when there is a very distinct black point and a very distinct white point

### BUILD ON CLARITY

Mono images benefit from the addition of some local contrast enhancement, which can be added using the Clarity slider in ACR

### ADD A COLOUR TONE

Try adding a sepia or split toning effect to your black-and-white images. This can be done in Photoshop, but it's quicker to use Camera Raw

© Frank Perella

© Frank Perella

# BLACK & WHITE PORTRAITS

## It's time to cast colour aside in favour of the timeless and beautiful look of monochrome photography with our in-depth masterclass

**All too often in the digital age, black and white is casually dismissed as a panacea for problem images;** a quick fix to fall back on when a photograph hasn't quite worked out in colour.

Back in the days when film still ruled the roost, things were very different. The idea of using black and white as a safety net simply didn't exist, and photographers had to commit to colour or black and white before they had actually taken a single image. Landscape photographers stocked up on colour slide film like Fujichrome Velvia 50 with nothing but colour images on their minds, while reportage photographers would go out shooting with Kodak Tri-X, happy in the knowledge that all their images would be pure black and white.

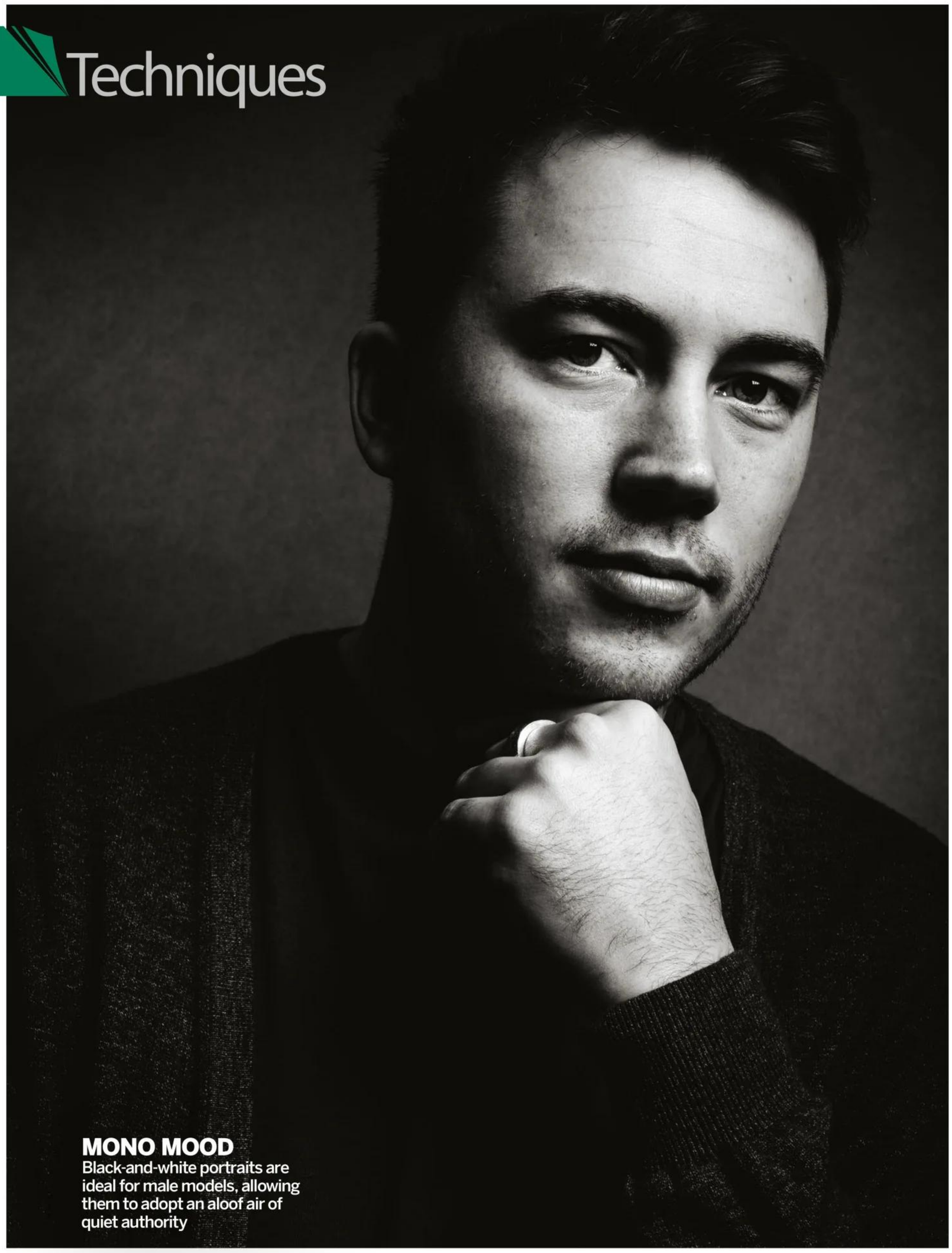
The idea of 'rescuing' a colour shot by converting it to monochrome was a completely unknown concept that simply wouldn't have occurred to the majority of photographers, not least because only a select number of them actually had anything to do with the processing of their images, particularly if they shot using colour film stock. For many photographers, 'post-production' simply meant filing their images away in a dark drawer.

But fast-forward to Photoshop and things are very different. Used the wrong white balance setting? Switch it to black and white. Exposure a bit dodgy? Try it in black and white. Lighting a little bit flat? Convert it to black and white.

Sometimes this actually works, and a decent image is salvaged from the mire. The downside is that fewer photographers are taking the time to actually think in black and white, even when it comes to a classic black-and-white medium like portraits. Over the next few pages, we'll show you why setting out to shoot portraits in black and white can help you to produce your best portrait shots yet.

## BLACK MAGIC

Train your eye to think in black and white and bring your monochrome portraits to life



**MONO MOOD**
Black-and-white portraits are ideal for male models, allowing them to adopt an aloof air of quiet authority

Black and white does, obviously, represent a reduction of what we are used to seeing. We see the world around us in full colour and our brains are conditioned to respond differently depending on the colours that we see. Studies have shown that red, green, blue and so on each evoke different emotions in us – some of them are unique to us as individuals and others are more universal.

Photographers often make great use of this in their work, ensuring that the scenes they capture explore the interplay between various colours. Many of the best landscape images succeed because the colours present in the scene produce some kind of instinctive emotional response in us, and the colours offset and complement each other perfectly.

But there is so much more to the world around us than colour. The more subtle charms of contrast, texture, pattern, shape and form are easily neglected when colour is at play, a problem to which black-and-white photography is the solution.

Take colour out of the equation, and our eyes are forced to make sense of the image in a way that they are not used to. Contrast, texture, pattern, shape and form are all brought to the fore and we are forced to take notice of the things that we might have otherwise overlooked.

Unlike landscape photography, in portrait photography colour can often be a problematic element. The wrong choice of clothing can easily distract, rather than enhance, the impact of the image. Skin tones are seldom perfectly smooth and even. Eye colour and hair colour may not produce a generally pleasing palette.

Black-and-white photography has often been thought of as a flattering medium for portraits precisely because it allows facial expression and structure to become the dominant characteristics. Uneven skin texture that would very probably look distracting and unattractive in a colour image can be a positive virtue in a black-and-white portrait.

But this doesn't mean that you can necessarily rely on a post-capture decision. To get the very best monochrome portraits possible, you'll put yourself at a distinct advantage if you use specific lighting, posing, composition – and even clothing – during capture, all the while with black and white in mind.

## Skin tones and colour channels

It's possible to make a great difference to the way your black-and-white images look by choosing which colour channels are emphasised when you convert your shots.

Photoshop's Channel Mixer allows you to mimic a traditional film technique. Coloured filters would be placed over the lens when shooting with black-and-white film to change how various colour tones are recorded.

In recent versions of Photoshop, the Black & White adjustment feature allows you to tweak a wider range of colours when converting. The different settings can have a dramatic effect on how skin tones are rendered in monochrome.

**REDS**
By pushing the red slider (plus orange and yellow sliders in the Black & White adjustment feature) towards the right and keeping other sliders low, skin tones are made to look brighter, purer and more even.

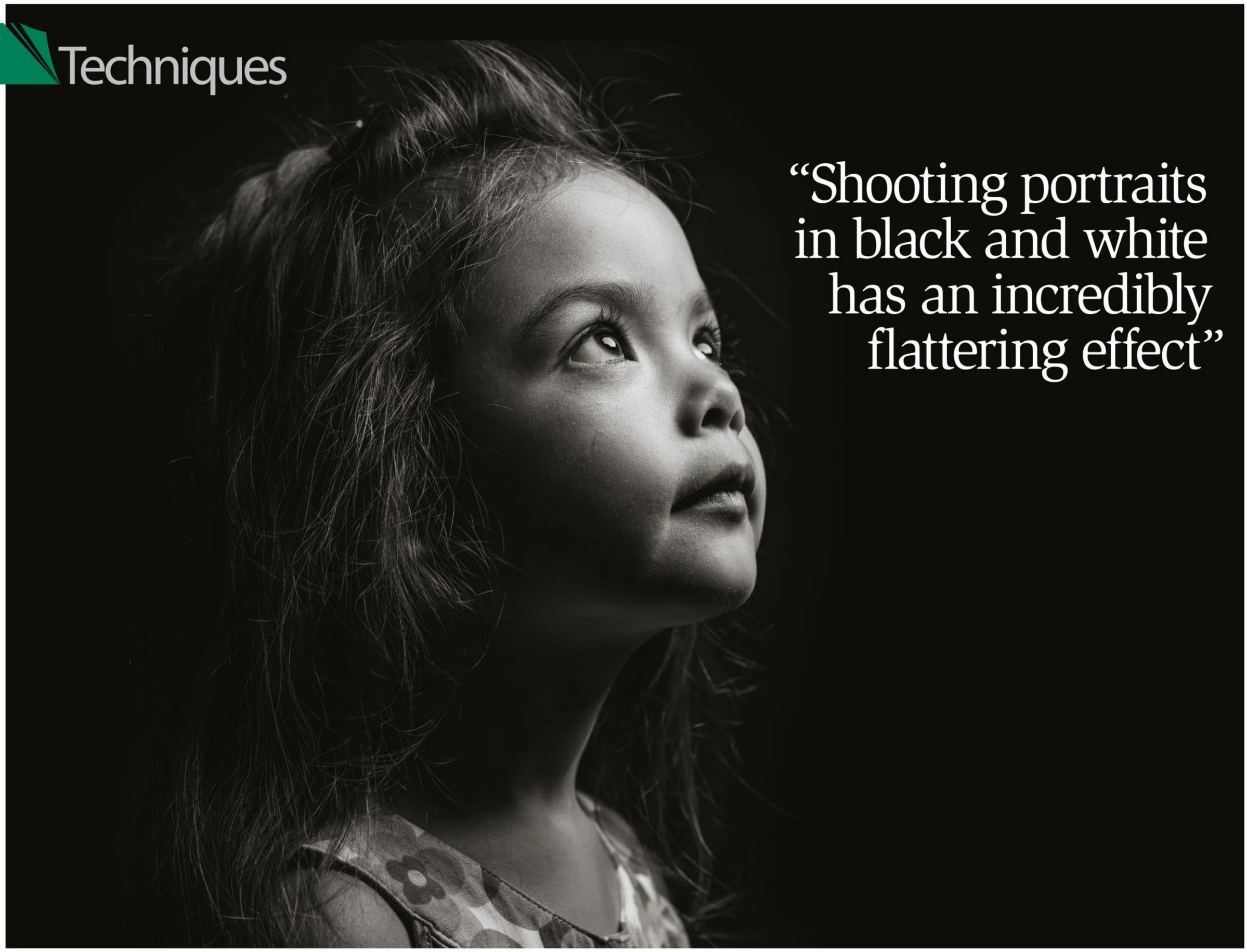
**GREENS**
When the green slider is pushed to the right, skin tones are not so immediately flattering, although with male models this might sometimes produce a more appropriate effect, particularly if you balance the green slider with the red slider.

**BLUES**
Pushing the blue slider up towards 100%, leaving the other sliders down low, produces the least flattering effect of all. However, if you are trying to emphasise the texture in an older model's skin, this is absolutely ideal.

## What makes this work?

### Chiaroscuro

This is an Italian word which essentially refers to the simultaneous presentation of light and shade. The interplay between the illuminated and non-illuminated areas of the image is visually compelling and replicates the atmosphere that you'd expect from nonelectric lighting indoors. This adds to the 'classic' or 'vintage' feel of a black-and-white portrait.



"Shooting portraits in black and white has an incredibly flattering effect"

EXPERT ADVICE

## Ian Hearnshaw on why black and white works so well for capturing portraits of children and babies

**Why is black and white so popular for portraits?**
It's a classic style that doesn't date and has a quality to it that colour can't reproduce. Fashions come and go, but black-and-white portraits will always remain. My clients just gravitate to the black-and-white images. There is something that colour images seem to lack.

**What does it add to portraits of children?**
I guess it's what black-and-white photography takes away that is more important. Black and white photography strips everything back to its basic form. With a colour image, the eye can be distracted by a rainbow of colours. Once you remove colour, you are left with the important components that make a beautiful portrait, such as light, texture, form, composition and emotion.

**Some people suggest that converting to black and white is a quick fix for images that haven't worked. What would you say about this?**
A colour image that is badly lit and poorly composed will still be badly lit and poorly composed if converted

**What do you need to be aware of or consider when producing black-and-white portraits?**
You need to think in black and white. Once you remove colour, your image consists solely of light, texture and patterns. Light and shade become even more part of the image and negative space also becomes more noticeable and effective. Light kicking off the side of your subject's face or a slight highlight exposing an eye surrounded by shade could make or break your image. Creative lighting makes for really powerful portraits.

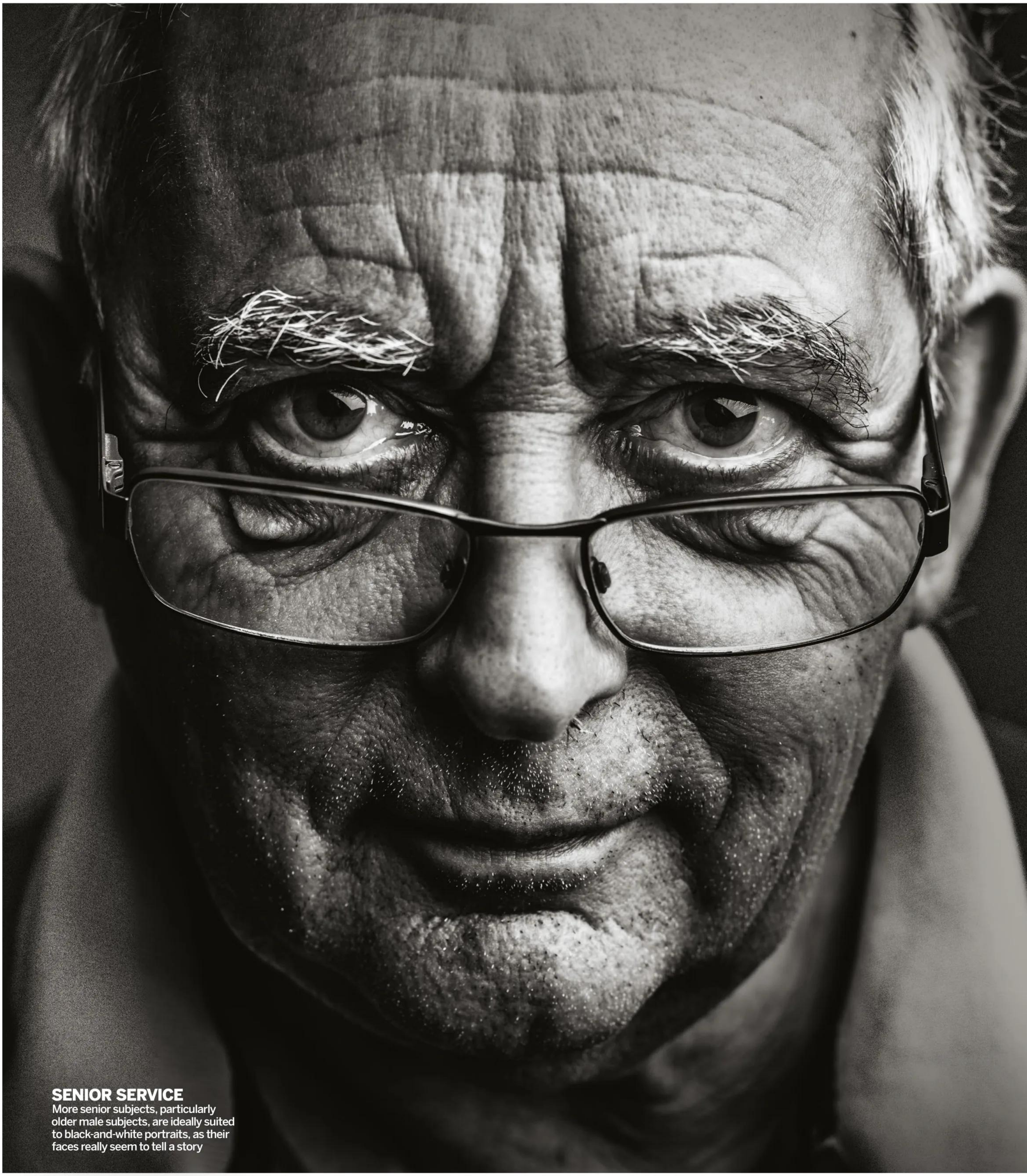
**What conversion method do you favour? Do you vary this or have one that you stick to?**
There isn't one method that works for all images. Every image needs to be treated differently to get the best out of it. I use Lightroom because the techniques I use there feel very much like the ones I used to use in the darkroom many years ago, but at the end of the day it's what works best for you.

"Treat every image differently"

Shooting portraits in black and white has an incredibly flattering effect, obscuring – or even making a virtue of – imperfections or uneven tones. Low-key portraits make use of the Renaissance idea of chiaroscuro, which refers to depicting a clear, defined contrast between illuminated and non-illuminated areas of the picture. Centuries ago, this would have been considered a good representation of the way an interior scene would have actually been lit – possibly by just one or two candles. In order to achieve this look, it's important that the lighting falling on the subject is very tightly controlled. The easiest way to achieve this is to use only one light on the subject. Dark clothing is usually ideal for black-and-white low-key portraits, as it ensures that there is nothing to compete for attention with the subject's face. When using flash, simply reducing the power output of the flash and/or using a smaller aperture can be all that's required to take your portrait into low-key territory.

It's sometimes assumed that high-key lighting, in which there is significantly less shadow and a bright-white background, doesn't lend itself to black-and-white portraits, but as David Bailey proved, it can work very well. A useful tip for shooting portraits in monochrome is to shoot RAW and set your camera to preview the images in black and white. This makes a massive difference to your ability to judge how the portraits you are shooting will actually look, allowing adjust your composition accordingly.

**COOL CONTRAST**
This image is all about contrast, and has a simplicity to it that would be difficult to replicate in colour. The model's clothing is an important part of what makes the image work



**SENIOR SERVICE**
More senior subjects, particularly older male subjects, are ideally suited to black-and-white portraits, as their faces really seem to tell a story

While it's a really useful idea to set your camera's picture mode to its monochrome setting, it's best to avoid the temptation to shoot in JPEG mode. A far better idea is to shoot in RAW and leave the actual black-and-white conversion until you reach the editing and processing stage.

Your camera may be capable of producing a good black-and-white image all by itself, but it's unlikely to match the quality that you can achieve if you use Photoshop, Lightroom or perhaps even Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 (visit **www.niksoftware.com/silverefexpro** to check it out) and produce the black-and-white conversion yourself. Current LCD screens on cameras are excellent but the screen size-to-resolution ratio can make things appear slightly better than they will look when you see them full-size on your monitor. By shooting black-and-white portraits in JPEG mode you are relying on your camera's built-in algorithms to achieve the best-possible image. Even though most cameras allow you to adjust contrast and even filter effects, you are closing off a lot of potential in your photographs.

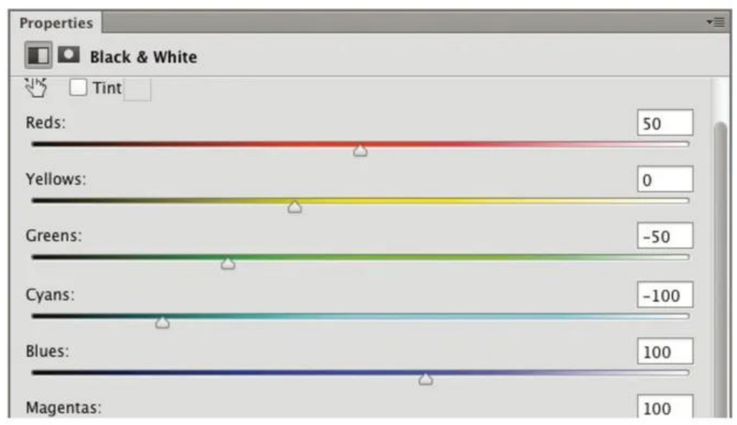
Black-and-white portraits are all about shadows and highlights, and you can only take full control of the precise tonality of each by converting your files in professional image-editing software. Local contrast (sometimes also referred to as acutance, edge contrast or small-scale contrast) can also have a big impact on the outcome of your shots, and you'll need your editing software to make the most of this. A good example is the Clarity slider in Adobe's Camera RAW software, which is designed to increase acutance. This can be really useful for adding a bit of pop to black-and-white portraits.

With practice, you'll find that there are certain settings and conversion techniques that you particularly like. Your image-editing software will also allow you to save certain presets that you find work well. However, it's always best to carefully consider the shots that you take and adjust settings for each individual image that you process, rather than simply using a one-size-fits-all preset.

# Bring out the texture in portraits

## 01 CLARITY SLIDER

When you open your RAW file in Adobe Camera Raw, pull the Clarity slider all the way to 100%. You will immediately see a huge amount of detail emerge in the image and this will give you a good basis to work from.

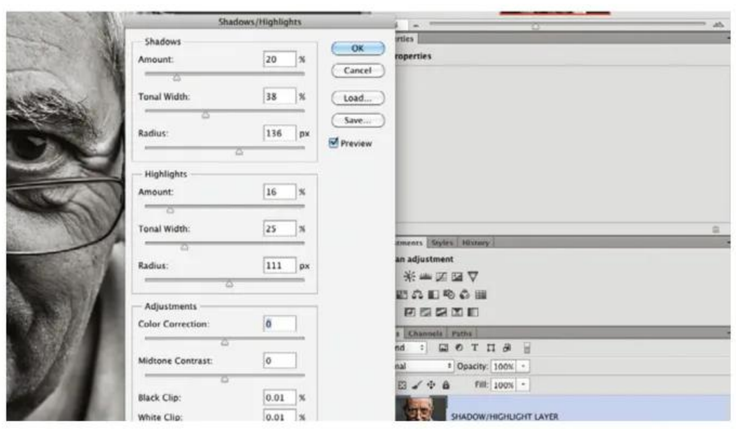



## 02 EMPHASISE THE BLUES

Open your image in Photoshop, create a Black & White adjustment layer and push the blue slider to the right, while keeping the other sliders low. This will ensure that all the nuances of skin texture are highlighted.

## 03 CONTRAST ENHANCEMENT

Make two duplicate layers of the image. Set one to Multiply blend mode, and the other to Screen blend mode. Right-click on each layer, click Blending Options and hold the Alt key while you play with the This Layer sliders.

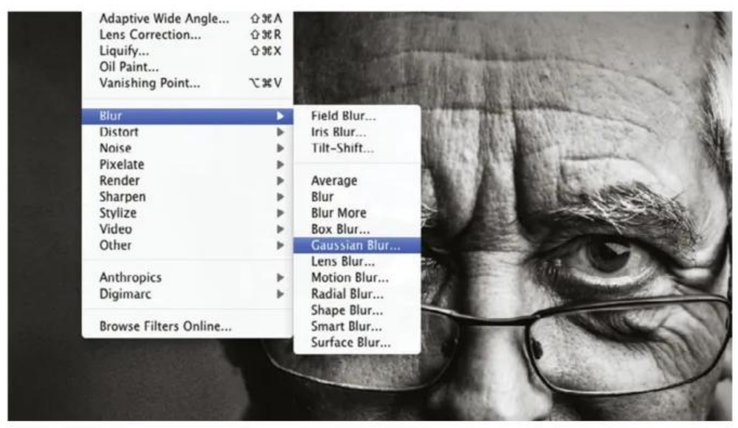



## 04 SHADOWS/HIGHLIGHTS

Create a new layer. Hold the Alt key and select Merge Visible from the Layers palette drop-down menu. This will create a composite layer. Now go to Image>Adjustments>Shadows/Highlights and adjust the various sliders to further enhance the skin texture.

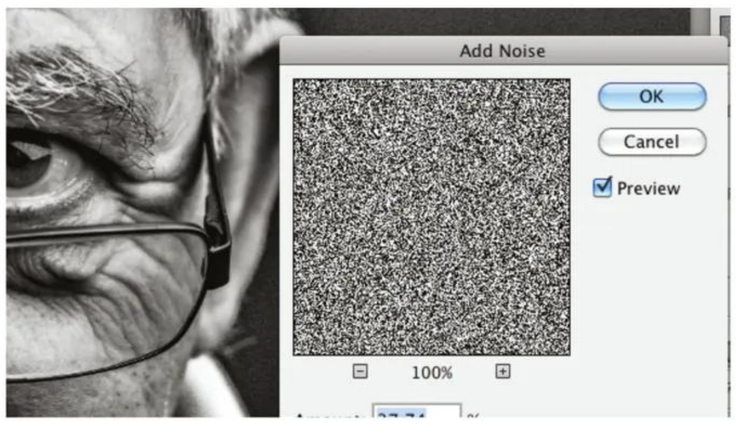
## 05 DODGE AND BURN

On a new layer, set blending mode to Soft Light. Hit Edit>Fill and select 50% Gray. Use the Brush tool with a low Opacity and paint either black (to burn) or white (to dodge) to darken and brighten various areas of the image. This is great for emphasising skin creases and wrinkles.




## 06 GAUSSIAN BLUR

Create another composite layer as in Step 4. Change the blending mode of the layer to Screen and add a small amount of Gaussian blur by going to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Add a layer mask and paint in areas that you wish to brighten up and 'rubberise' slightly.




## 07 ADD NOISE

On a new layer, set to Soft Light and fill with 50% Gray as in Step 5. Hit Filter>Noise>Add Noise and add monochromatic, Gaussian noise. Add a layer mask and 'erase' the noise over the subject with a black brush.

## 08 DARKEN THE EDGES

Make a selection of the perimeter of the image, feather it and then use either Curves, Levels or a duplicate layer set to Multiply blend mode to darken down the edges of the image.

## 09 FINAL TOUCHES

Use the Curves tool to perform one last contrast boost on the image. Use the anchor points to form a slight S-shaped curve for the best effect. Once this is done, save your converted monochrome photograph.

**ACHIEVE PERFECT MONOCHROMES**

The key to achieving a great black and white image is strong composition, lots of texture and rich tonality. It's learning how to identify these traits in a colourful scene, which is where the real skill lies

## How to shoot standout...

# Black and white landscapes

# Black and white landscapes

## Uncover the secrets of transforming your colour photos into timeless black and white imagery with this complete in-depth guide

**Black and white imagery has been the mainstay of photography throughout its history.** In the early days of film, photographers would painstakingly process their colourless negatives and manipulate the tones of the image in the darkroom before being able to reveal their masterpieces. Fast-forward 200 years and not much has changed – black and white remains as popular as ever, despite the invention of colour photography.

Even though digital cameras now enable us to review the shot immediately after it has been taken, creating a black and white image requires converting the resulting colour photo into mono. This means that to some extent you're shooting blind when it comes to black and white imagery, like film photographers of yesteryear.

Being able to identify elements that will translate well into mono takes a certain amount of skill. Capturing the image is just half the battle, as when it comes to post-processing there's much more to creating a black and white than simply removing the colour – boosting contrast and enhancing textures are just a few key areas that need to be considered during processing. We'll be covering everything you need to know about how to start capturing stunning black and white landscapes of your very own with our complete guide.

# Learn to see in black and white

Find out the four key ingredients that are paramount to creating incredible black and white imagery

## 1 Dramatic lighting

In its essence, photography is all about capturing light and the effect of light in different environments, and so capturing a scene with impactive lighting is a guaranteed way to add lots of drama to your shot. An easy way to do this is to simply time your shot when the sun passes behind a layer of clouds, as this will cause them to become back-lit, increasing contrast and emphasising their shape. This also works well when the sun is low in the sky.

© Danilo Faria

## 2 Strong composition

A strong composition is the backbone to any attractive landscape. Make sure you utilise basic compositional rules like the rule of thirds by placing the horizon on one of the horizontal thirds, and use lead-in lines to draw the viewer's eye through the shot. Foreground interest can be a great way to fill empty space at the front of the frame – rocks, tree stumps and even tall grass can work well.

© Grant Murray

## 3 Tonal contrast

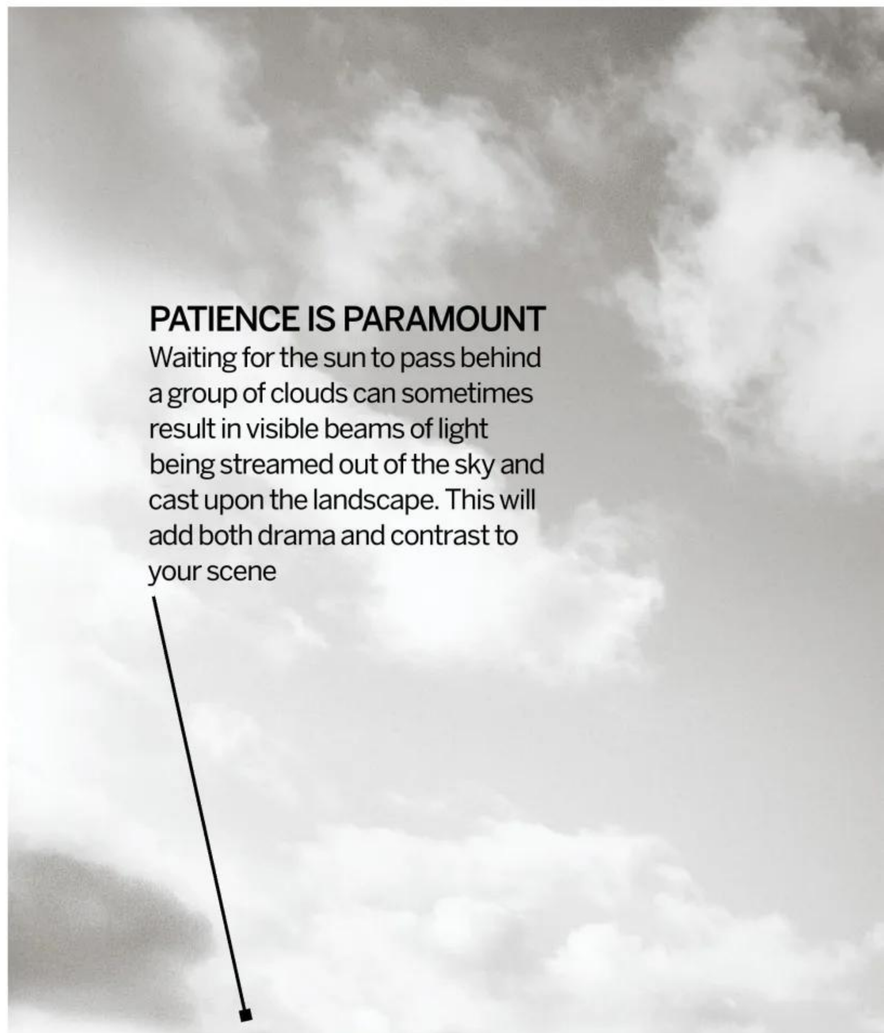
Tonal contrast is created when light and dark tones are placed against one another. Having good tonal contrast within an image will cause brighter elements to stand out within the frame, particularly because the human eye is naturally drawn towards the lightest areas within the frame. Try to bear this in mind when composing your shots and work to place brighter objects next to or against darker ones to create a more dramatic effect.

© Omur Kahveci

## 4 Texture and pattern

As both textures and patterns are strongly emphasised within a black and white image, using this to your strength is always a good idea. Rocks, plant life and even bodies of water are rife with intricate textures and can be found in abundance throughout the great outdoors. Identifying these elements for your black and white image and placing them at the forefront of the shot will help to create a point of interest that draws the viewer's eye to the image.

© Steve Landeros


PATIENCE IS PARAMOUNT
Waiting for the sun to pass behind a group of clouds can sometimes result in visible beams of light being streamed out of the sky and cast upon the landscape. This will add both drama and contrast to your scene

© Tom Calton

One of the first things any photographer must do before heading out is to ensure that they have the correct gear. Starting with the basics, a sturdy tripod is a must – especially if you're planning on using slower shutter speeds. Not only that, but keeping your camera in a fixed position will enable you to slow down the pace and really think about the compositional elements within your shot.

Although not fundamental to creating striking mono images, a polarising filter is a handy tool to have as it will help to darken the blue skies, generating contrast between the fluffy white clouds and the rich tones of the sky.

If you want to capture fine-art style images a Neutral Density filter is worth investing in, as it means you'll be able to use slower shutter speeds. This is useful when shooting near bodies of water as using a slower shutter speed will blur the ripples in the water for a silky smooth appearance. Using a slow shutter speed on a windy day will also blur clouds as they pass, creating dynamic streaks of texture in the sky. An ND Grad may also be useful to balance exposures and enhance cloud details.

## The clouds make a difference

### Discover why the sky is just as important as the landscape

When colour is stripped, everything from shape, form and texture become incredibly important in achieving an attractive photo, but one area that's commonly overlooked is the sky.

A common misconception is that shooting on a bright, sunny day will result in much more attractive images. Shooting a landscape where the sky is a cloudless expanse of blue doesn't translate well into black and white as the sky will be devoid of any texture or shape, making your image appear bland.

To increase your chances of shooting a great sky, plan ahead – aim to shoot on a cloudy day with the odd break of sunlight for best results. Dull, grey clouds may not look appealing in colour, but when converted into mono they add drama.

Gear aside, it's also a good idea to plan out where you would like to shoot ahead of time and, if possible, decide on a series of interesting locations that are within close proximity to one another so you can maximise your time by visiting each spot in one trip. As the weather plays a pivotal role, keeping track of the weather forecast in your chosen shoot location is also vital.

Avid mono landscape photographer Grant Murray (**www.grantmurrayphotography.com**) explains, "I tend to do a lot of homework beforehand on the potential subjects and likely weather and environment conditions by visiting the intended locations as well as using tools like online maps, tide tables and radar and weather apps to determine the possible conditions."

It's important to remember that the scene you shoot doesn't always have to be a sprawling vista. Even a small expanse of land can create an eye-catching image, it just requires you to train your eye to spot these gems. As landscape photographer Steve Landeros (**www.stevelanderosphotography.com**) explains, "Lines and texture are, of course, great elements to have within a composition, but I first look for a subject with as little clutter as possible. I have found that too many lines or textures can also distract from what I look for in a composition."

> "A polarising filter is a handy tool as it will help darken the blue skies"

**CLOUDY SKIES**
Making sure the sky is filled with an abundance of fluffy clouds when you shoot is vital as this will add much a needed boost of texture and shape to your image

**NORMANTON CHURCH**
Just by following a handful of simple compositional rules it's possible to create an alluring landscape image out of even the most minimal of scenes. This image uses both the rule of thirds and lead-in lines to draw the viewer's attention

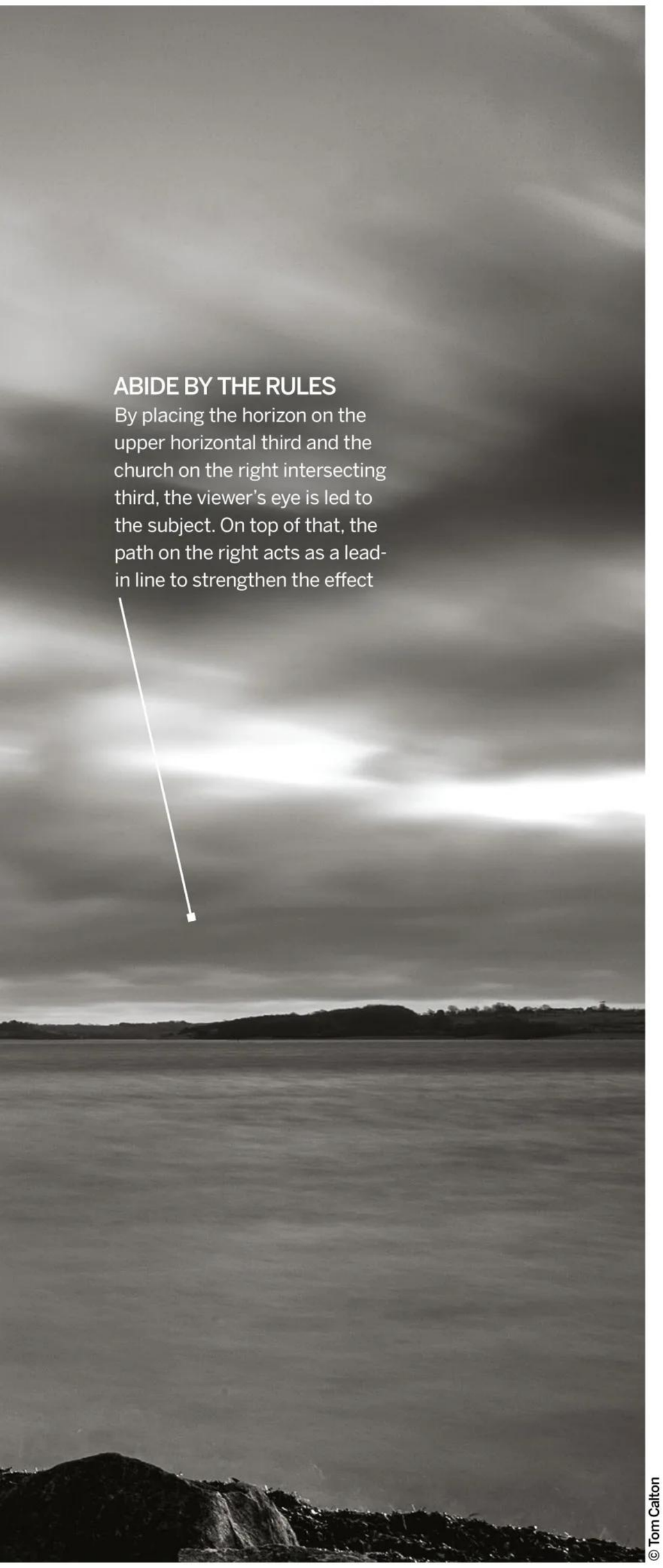
## Steps to great shots

**1 Set up the tripod** As we'll be using a slow shutter speed to blur the nearby water and sky, lock-off your camera on a sturdy tripod to prevent it from moving during the exposure. Then, carefully compose the shot and focus.

**2 Attach an ND filter** Using an ND filter helps reduce the amount of light entering the lens and lets us achieve a slower shutter speed. We used a 6-stop ND, though this will ultimately depend on the amount of light in your scene.

**3 Switch to Aperture Priority** Set the camera to ISO 100 then switch the camera's mode dial to Aperture Priority mode and keep closing down the aperture until you get a shutter speed of around 15 seconds or slower – this should be slow enough to enable the moving water to blur.

**4 Take the shot** When dealing with slow shutter speeds it's best to use a shutter release cable to avoid knocking the camera during the exposure. If you don't have a cable release to hand, simply set the camera to Self-Timer mode before taking the shot.



**ABIDE BY THE RULES**
By placing the horizon on the upper horizontal third and the church on the right intersecting third, the viewer's eye is led to the subject. On top of that, the path on the right acts as a lead-in line to strengthen the effect

© Tom Calton

| In-camera photograph | | Conversion photograph |
|---|---|---|
| | V | |
| Modern DSLRs enable you to capture black and white JPEG images in-camera. The benefit is that you can immediately see the final mono image without any further processing needed. | **Shooting** | Although shooting and processing a colour RAW file requires more time, working with a RAW file will provide greater flexibility in post-processing than a JPEG. |
| With a black and white JPEG, most of the editing work has been done for you. This saves time, but also allows less further creativity in post-processing. | **Editing** | Shooting in RAW grants access to a host of editing tools in post-processing, giving you full control over the tonal range and amount of contrast featured within the image. |
| Your camera will automatically add contrast, sharpening and noise reduction, but as the file is compressed into a JPEG, data is discarded to reduce its size. | **Quality** | Without suffering from compression, RAW files are ultimately larger but retain more data than a JPEG, which means they offer higher quality images. |
| If you're not confident with post-processing then it's a great way to start in black and white, though you'll soon seek more possibilities in RAW. | **Verdict** | This method requires more time and skill to master, especially in post-processing, but it's the most rewarding way of achieving high quality mono imagery. |

So, you're at the location, you have your kit set up and you're ready to shoot. The question is, what settings do you use? If your camera is set up on a tripod then you won't need to worry about achieving a fast enough shutter speed to avoid camera-shake as you would if you were holding the camera. With a tripod in tow you can experiment with long exposures to create motion in clouds or water, but you may need an Neutral Density filter to stop images overexposing on brighter days. You'll want to ensure that all of your image is pin sharp from front to back too, which means that using a small aperture is going to be key. Stopping your lens down to an aperture of f11 or smaller will make sure that everything remains pin sharp. This also happens to be the aperture where most lenses will perform best optically, which will certainly help to ensure optimum sharpness throughout the image.

Although not entirely mandatory, shooting your images in RAW is often regarded as the best choice

**"Shooting your images in RAW is often regarded the best choice"**

as it will give you greater flexibility when it comes to editing later on. However, if you're struggling to envision how the scene will look when converted in black and white, a handy tip is to try shooting in both RAW and JPEG and switch the camera's Picture Style option to Monochrome. This will cause the JPEG images to appear on the back of your camera's LCD screen in black and white, giving you a rough preview of how the final image will look. Another advantage to this method is that although the JPEG images will be fixed in black and white, the RAW file that is recorded alongside it will remain in full colour, ready for editing later on. The downside to both RAW and JPEG at the same time is that it will take up more space on your camera's memory card, so you'll either have to invest in a larger card or simply buy more smaller ones in order to accommodate for the number of files created.

When you have everything set up, you mustn't be afraid of altering your position and trying out new angles. With your camera locked in position on a tripod, it's often tempting to get one good shot and call it a day. "I'm constantly changing my tripod height, focal length, filters and so on, to see what works best," Murray explains. "You can't be too rigid with preconceived plans and compositions because you could possibly miss out on some fantastic opportunities that you might not have the opportunity to shoot again."

## Enhance textures

### Use the tools in Photoshop to intensify patterns and textures

Texture is a vitally important element in black and white photography. However, sometimes patterns and details aren't always as dramatic as you'd hope and may need a little tweaking in Photoshop. Two tools that can aid with this task are Dodge and Burn. These tools draw direct influence from techniques used in film photography, when photographers would expose a negative to a sheet of light-sensitive paper in the darkroom to create a positive photo. Photographers would selectively brighten (dodge) and darken (burn) specific areas of the image in order to increase contrast and bring out fine details. In Photoshop, the Dodge and Burn tools work along the same principle, though they also offer the advantage of providing brush influence over only the Shadows, Highlights or Midtones in the image for greater creative control.

# "There are a host of ways to add contrast to a mono image"

Before you start editing your images, one of the most important things to understand is how colours will appear once they have been converted. If your image relies heavily on the use of colour to stand out, it doesn't necessarily mean that it will have the same effect once the colours have been stripped away. A basic way of understanding how this works requires looking at a colour wheel. Colours that appear near one another on the colour wheel – like green and purple – will not generate much contrast, as both tones will appear as a similar shade of grey. Using the same logic, contrasting colours – colours that are placed on opposite sides of the colour wheel, like red and green – will appear as significantly different shades of grey and will help to create contrast.

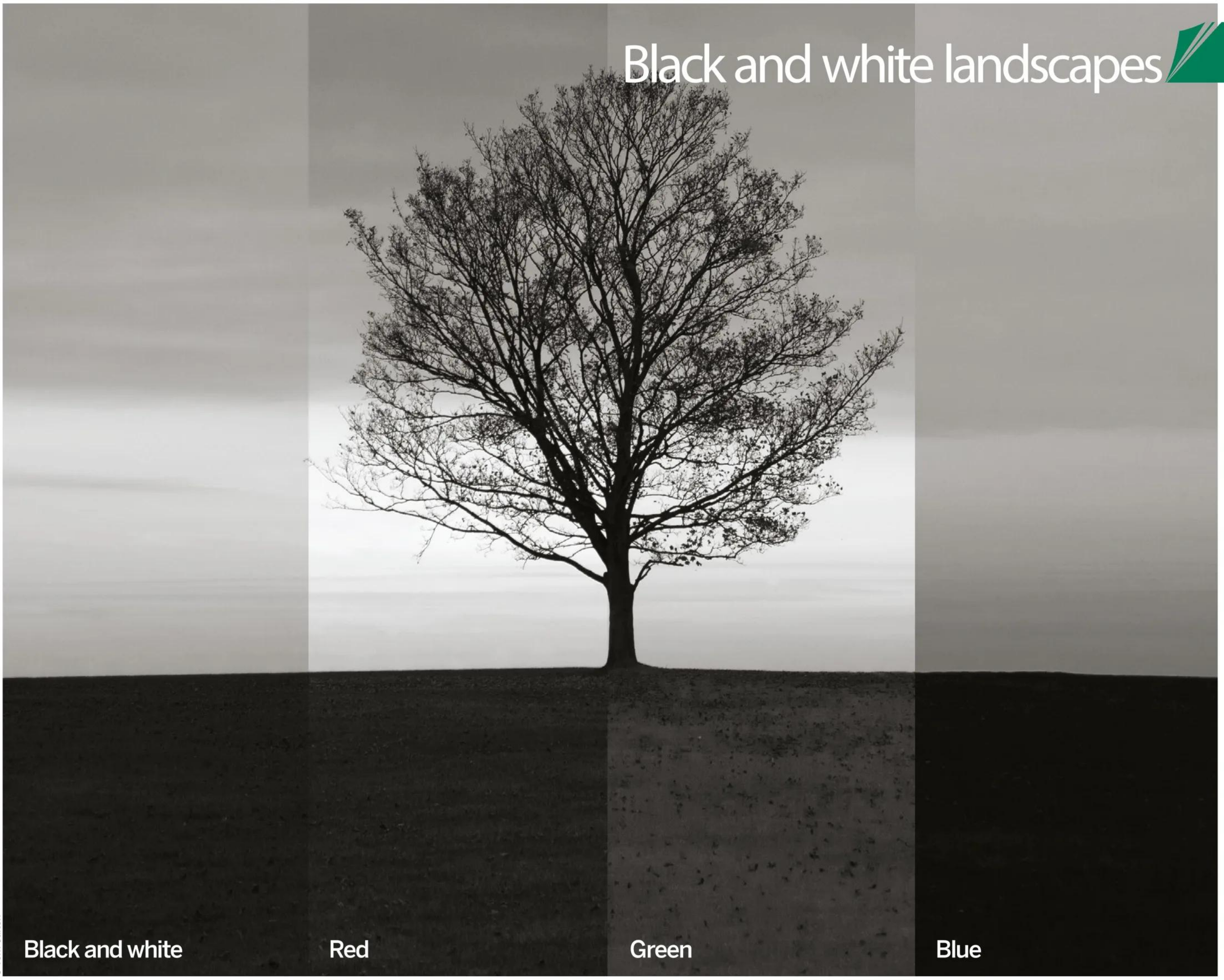
There are many ways to go about converting your images into mono and over time every photographer will develop their own optimised workflow. Steve Landeros gives us an insight in to his method. "I first import my images into Lightroom 4 for a quick crop and evaluation. Then I export to Photoshop CS6 where I dodge, burn and create contrast in the image. I also use Niks Silver Efex Pro 2 to add any toning and maybe a few more focused contrast adjustments, then it's back to CS6 for dust-spotting. Once that's complete, I move the file back to Lightroom for a final curves adjustment and maybe add a vignette."

One fundamental error often made by beginners is to simply desaturate the image and leave it at that. Desaturating the image will turn the image into greyscale, but it will also mean that the image lacks contrast, appearing flat and lifeless. There are a host of ways to add contrast to a mono image and, once mastered, it will make the world of difference to your images. If you've shot in RAW, an easy way to get started is to open your image in Photoshop to reveal the Camera RAW Interface. From here, move the Saturation slider to the left to remove all colours and then move the Contrast and Clarity sliders to the right. This is just one very quick example of how to process your images, but check out 'Take control of tones' on the next page to find out how to manipulate individual colour channels.

**CAPTURE TEXTURES**

The patterns and shapes found on the surface of rocks are a fantastic source of texture and form, as displayed in this image taken by Danilo Faria of the Vermillion Cliffs in Arizona, USA

© Danilo Faria



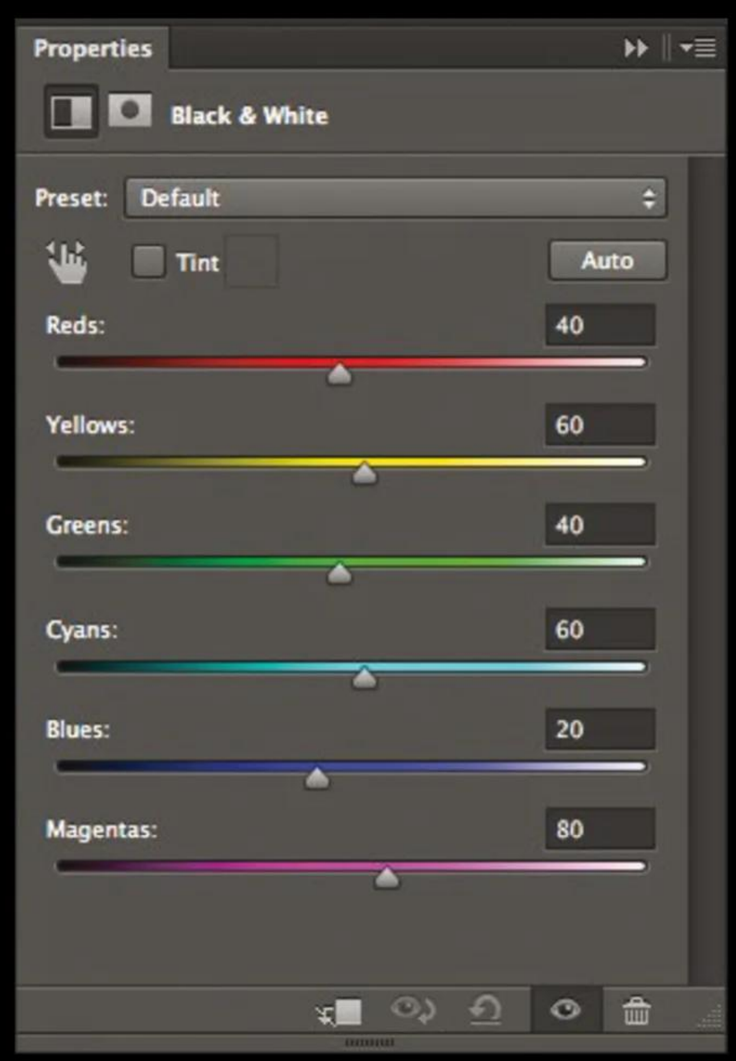

© Tom Calton

# Take control of tones

## Transform your colour photos into stunning black and white images using Photoshop's Black & White adjustment layer

Start by loading your image into Photoshop and head down to the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette (Window>Layers) – this is shown as a half white, half black circle. In the list, find Black & White and select it. You'll notice that your image has been transformed into black and white and you have access to a host of different coloured sliders consisting of Reds, Yellows, Greens, Cyans, Blues and Magentas. Although your image is currently being shown as a black and white image, these sliders will enable you to manipulate the various colours to increase tonal contrast. Move any of the sliders to the left and Photoshop will start to darken these colours present in your photo, while moving it to the right will lighten them. The effectiveness of the sliders will depend on the vibrancy of the colours in your image.

At the top of the Adjustment palette you'll see a Preset option – clicking this will reveal a list of ready-made adjustments that mimic the effects of traditional coloured photographic filters. Cycling through this list of options to see how they affect your image is a great way of getting to grips with how each slider alters your photo. Remember, you can always refer back to the Default Preset to go back to the original settings. The main advantage of using adjustment layers is that they're non-destructive. You can always delete the layer from the Layers palette to refer back to the original image.



## SHAPES AND LIGHT

Francés explains that he spent time waiting for precisely the right moment to capture this shot, "so that the image is striking to the eye of the beholder"

All images © Eduard Francés

# Shooting the streets in B&W

## Photographer Eduard Francés reveals the secrets behind his compelling reportage images of daily life

**Street photography generally looks so much simpler than it actually is.** The reality is that truly compelling images captured on the streets of towns and cities around the world are difficult to achieve, as they require the photographer to be highly observant, highly technically proficient and fast. It's little wonder that photographers take such differing approaches to this genre; some photographers choose to be bold and unashamed of their chosen pursuit while others prefer to be as discreet as possible, shooting only from the hip or from the distances afforded by a telephoto lens. The challenges of street photography are such that many people simply never really try to attempt it, and even if they do, they are not willing to do so too boldly. "People do not dare to [photograph] people too directly," explains photographer Eduard Francés. "I always [take my street images] at eye level. I think photography is about shooting and composing, [so] when a photographer shoots at waist height [he or she] can't see what they're doing."

Photography has been a long-standing interest for him. "I was very interested in photography as an art expression. I began to read about authors and

see their works. I think in the beginning it is very important to see works of good artists of photography." For Francés, it was the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank and Elliott Erwitt that particularly captured his imagination. "Cartier-Bresson was a great photographer," says Francés. "His ability to capture that unique moment was [of the] highest [standard]. I like [Robert Frank's work] because I [too] capture the world as it is. Erwitt, like me, was a tireless seeker of the so-called 'decisive moment'."

Street photography appealed to Francés because of the way it reflects the unique and the special. "I think it has a unique and unrepeatable aspect," he begins to explain. "It's very important to show the next generation the way of life in our society." To capture successful street images, Francés says that your own personal characteristics are vital. "You must be a great observer and have patience, regardless of managing the technique," he explains. "I always like to search for the reality, and I especially like to handle the light and capture what I see with my eyes."

## Meet Eduard Francés

Born in Xativa (Valencia) in Spain, Eduard Francés is a self-taught photographer who started taking photos in 1987. He says that his goal is "to take a photo which has a life of its own in black and white". He says that the streets are his favourite place to take photos, "where I try to catch with my eyes other people's life and show it to my audience."

**LOST MAN**
"Taken on the streets of New York, I was struck by the look [of the] lost man and [the] dogs watching their owner"

**SAT ON THE STEPS**
Francés' keen observational skills enabled him to see this shot and quickly capture it before the simplicity was spoilt by the arrival of more people

In terms of the techniques he employs, Francés favours taking full control, as you'd expect from a street photographer who shuns shooting from the hip. "I usually use spot metering and manual," he reveals. "Sometimes I work very comfortably with hyperfocal, and with the camera in silent mode."

Formally, Francés was a Kodak Tri-X 400 man, which was loaded into his Nikon FM2 camera. It was with this combination that he captured his first successful street image of some ladies in a hairdressing salon. These days, however, he favours a Leica M6 and Canon EOS 1Ds Mark III. "I think that today digital photography [has very much] improved, first of all, the facility to see the result at the time." However, Francés says that, while digital technology "facilitates the work a little", street photographers still need to work very hard to "capture those unrepeatable moments of life."

It's actually very common for street photography to be presented in black and white, and this is certainly something that Francés favours when it comes to his own work. "For me personally the image has more impact in black and white… I think that street photography gains more strength [when presented in monochome]. You have something different to the rest of photography… I learned this technique and I learned to see in grey, converting colours to greyscale. The force that an image has with a

"I think it has a unique and unrepeatable aspect"

# Shooting the streets in B&W

**FLOUR FESTIVAL**
This might look like the aftermath of a disaster, but in truth "this is a traditional festival of a city in Spain where people make a battle of eggs and flour"

nikita

# Shooting the streets in B&W

## "Hours and hours of patient photographing are required"

wide-tonal range and its shadows and lights – it transmits a better emotion and sentiment, [and] in portraits you have much more emotional strength."

One of the most controversial topics concerned with street photography is the issue of permission. People are in a public place, so technically you can photograph whatever you wish to, but it's generally advisable to apply a fair amount of caution and think carefully about whether it's wise to photograph something or someone. One approach is to ask for people's permission before taking the photo, but the difficulty with this is that you cannot capture spontaneous moments this way – and for photographers like Francés this is precisely what they are looking for. "Yes, sometimes I ask for permission, but some of [my images] are 'stolen'. I think when you ask for permission, the photograph instantly loses its interest, so sometimes I prefer to 'steal' that moment." However, he insists that he would never try to take a picture of an unwilling or uncomfortable subject. "Never. I always respect people and if they don't want me to take a picture of them, I don't do that," he explains.

Although nervous or inexperienced street photographers are inevitably tempted by telephoto lenses, Francés says that he prefers to shoot instead with wide-angle optics, which are typically favoured by most serious snappers. "My [main] lens is a 35mm, though sometimes I use a 24mm too," he reveals.

One thing that's very important for those new to street photography to understand is that it's far from easy to capture dozens and dozens of successful images on every shoot. Hours and hours of patient photographing are required in order to capture even only a couple of photos that you are truly happy with. The ratio of usable to unusable shots is a lot less favourable than it typically is in other forms of photography, which can be off-putting at first. Even seasoned street photographers experience this, as Francés explains. "Sometimes I'm going home without any, and other days it's about ten – but no more."

Francés' future plans include a book and an exhibition, which will be staged at several different locations, consisting of 40 of his photographs. To see more of his street work, visit his website at **www.eduardfrances.com**.

### Francés' quick street tips

- Learn the technique
- Be brave
- Get close to the subject
- Be patient
- Observe mindfully

**BACKLIGHTING**
This was the result of playing with the famous Eiffel Tower and capturing passers-by backlit to create silhouettes

**TOILET HUMOUR**
This was another example of the need to shoot quickly – Francés was aware of the noise of the shutter and so had limited opportunity to grab this image

**HEADS IN THE CROWD**
Francés noticed the pattern created by the crowd and used this to form the basis of a very graphic composition, accentuated by the black and white

# How to shoot Fine art black & white

## The 10 very best professional techniques to help take your photography into new territory

**Unlike some aspects of photography, fine art is something that's somewhat difficult to define and it's a topic that's open to different definitions.** For some, the key word is art; this is a field that places much more emphasis than is perhaps more usual on the idea of artistic expression through photography. In other words, if general photography is inherently about the literal depiction of something – a truthful record of a person, place or event – fine art photography is often about the photographer's unashamedly personal, artistic expression, in which a photographic image just happens to be the primary medium. Typically, the veracious depiction of the subject isn't the primary aim in much fine art photography; in fact, the who, what, where, when and why of the image is often purposely left to the imagination and individual interpretation of the viewer. As such, fine art photography is often rather abstract and even surreal.

However, some might suggest that fine art is, instead, a euphemistic term for high-end black-and-white photography; indeed, some photographers describe their work as fine art despite the fact that there is nothing that's abstract or surreal at all about their images.

However, it's true to say that there's a strong historic connection between fine art and black and white. Over the next few pages, you'll discover the techniques and approaches that the professionals use to create fine art monochrome images that are evocative and compelling.

**FINE ART FINESSE**
Black-and-white fine art photography is difficult to define, but there are distinct approaches and techniques that will help you improve your work

© Dmitriy Pokrovskiy

# 1 Capture compelling subjects

## Fine art black-and-white photography sometimes requires you to look beyond the obviously appealing subjects you'd normally capture

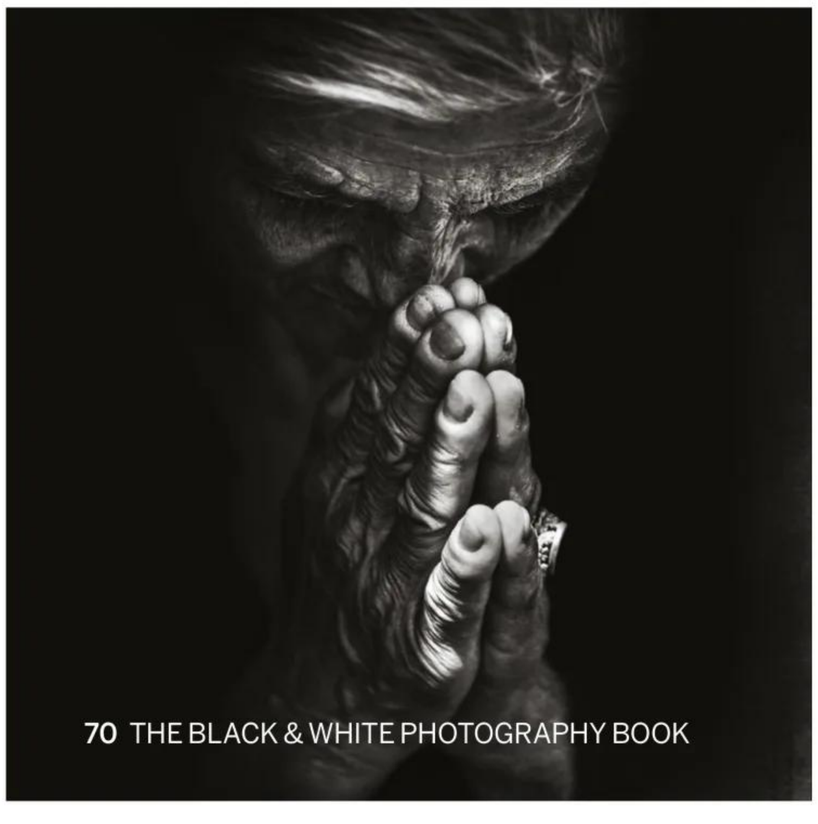
If black-and-white photography wasn't the primary field that you pursued as a photographer, you may be in a habit of looking past many of the subjects and scenes that are ideal for a fine art treatment.

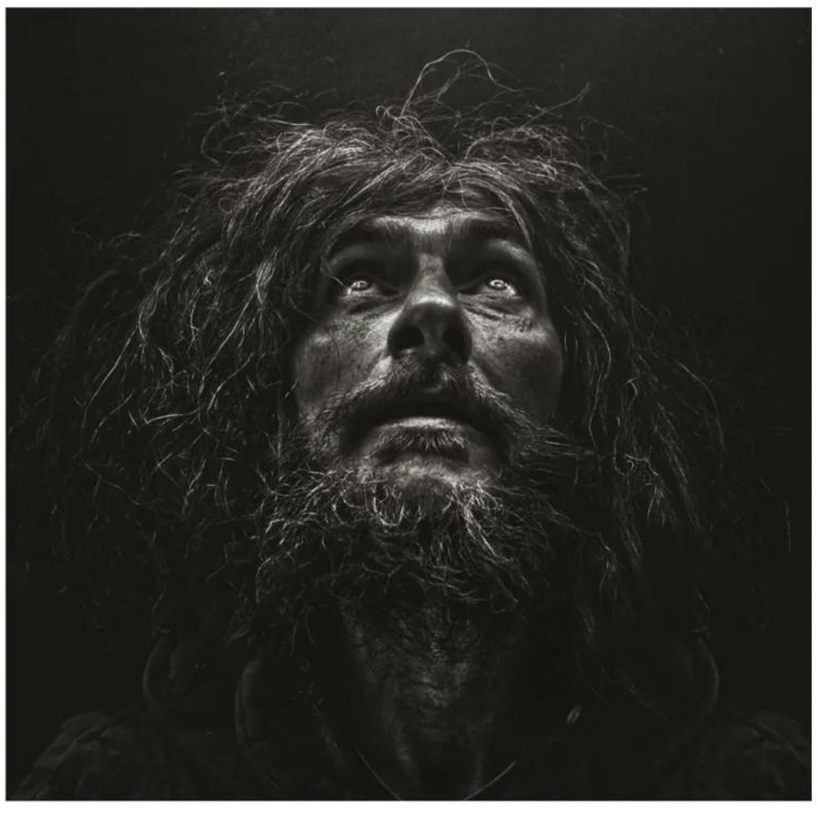
This is because we inevitably seek to create images that will appeal to others; we want to receive positive feedback on photography websites and harvest as many likes as possible on social media. It's a natural thing to do and, more often than not, we do this by trying to produce photographs that are classically beautiful. It's tempting, therefore, to become rather focused on capturing only the most obviously compelling landscape scenes or the most highly attractive models – and striving to make their beauty the foremost ingredient.

Fine art black-and-white photography is not necessarily as concerned with obvious beauty in terms of the main subject of the image. This is, to some extent, a defining feature of what constitutes fine art; the photographer's main goal is to be able to present the viewer with their vision of something without it then filtering or diluting their artistic intentions according to what the viewer is likely to consider beautiful.

Often, fine art black-and-white photography focuses on subject matter that a photographer might ordinarily look away from, but finds a way to make it visually compelling; fine art black and white is concerned more with realism than idealism. In this way, it shares something with documentary photography, but fine art differs in that the interpretive, artistic decisions of the photographer are far more evident, with the subject matter clearly being represented in a particular way in the imagery that suits the photographer's purpose.

Fine art black-and-white photography often implies some form of emotional or intellectual engagement with the subject on the part of the photographer, and there is often the sense that the photographer is trying to distil a message or feeling into their work. Alternatively, some fine art photography is marked by a sense of emotional detachment from the subject.





## Emotional engagement

### Lee Jeffries discusses his images of the homeless

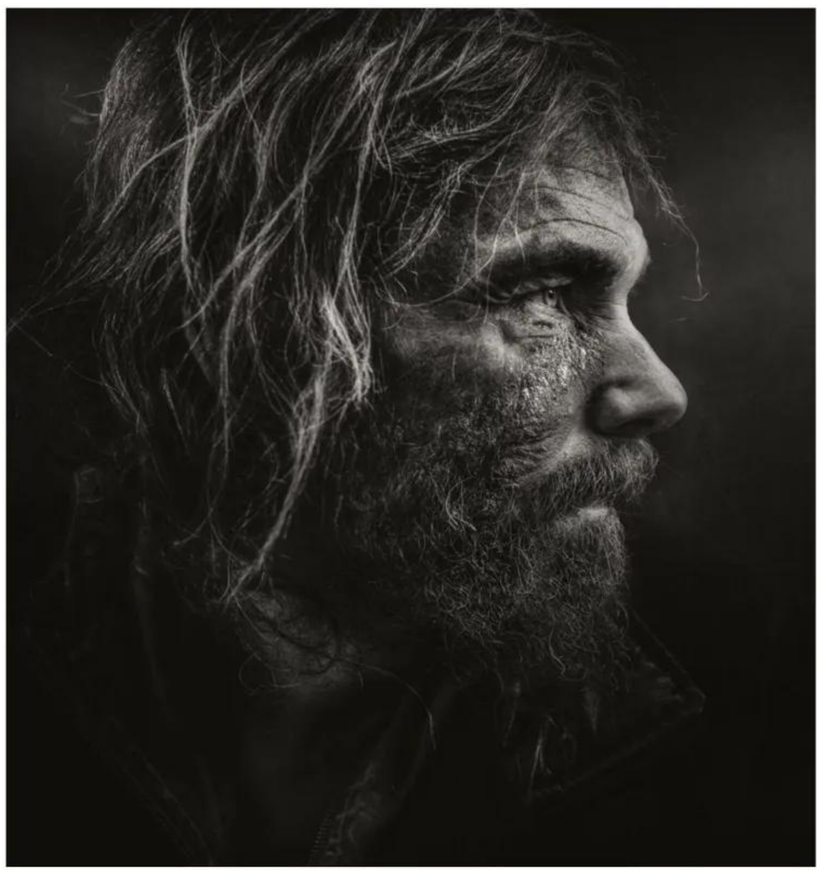
**How would you describe your work?**
My images have their roots in traditional documentary photography. I can't deny there is an underlying social message underpinning each one. For me, my final image goes further and hopefully is much more sophisticated. You'll hardly ever find a back-story to an image. I'll occasionally put one in when I feel it's justified, but the majority of my images standalone.

What I do try to do is pack in as many metaphysical qualities as I can... The light and shadow in specific areas of an image are not there by chance. The light of humanity. God. Hope. Faith. The shadow of despair, loneliness and evil. Throughout the image there is a battle between the two, which I hope provokes a human response in the viewer. I hope to engage our own conflicting feelings on faith on a subconscious level... Then there is the obvious: emotion. My images wouldn't work without it. The very basis of a storytelling portrait is emotion... Pure, unadulterated raw natural emotion.

**What are the key mistakes to avoid?**
Never compromise with your work. You have to be your own biggest critic. You will always be found out by releasing stuff that you know hasn't passed your own personal quality control.

Be ruthless in that regard, even if that means you don't get to post an image on social media that week or whatever. That's an important point, actually. Social media has allowed us all to get our stuff out there quickly and to a wide audience. It's the way I've always done it. When you develop a certain following there is that pressure to produce. Resist it. Be honest with yourself and your reasons for doing what you do. To see more of Lee's work, visit, www.leejeffries.500px.com.

**POWERFUL PORTRAITS**
Photographer Lee Jeffries has found considerable success with his intense fine art portraits of the homeless



# 2 Establish a style

## Whatever you decide to photograph, fine art black and white works best when it's consistent

As mentioned already, fine art black-and-white photography is difficult to pin down and define precisely; is all black-and-white photography automatically fine art? If not, what are the factors that make it something distinct?

One thing that's often noticeable among photographers whose work is either self-defined or identified by others as fine art is that they have a distinctive style with clear patterns and trends running through it. Typically, they photograph the same subject – or the same general type of subject – in a consistent and fairly uniform way, applying similar lighting, compositional and processing techniques on a regular basis.

This precision elevates a photographer's work to another level and helps contribute to the sense that they are intentionally and selectively creating a body of work that expresses their own personal vision."Start thinking outside the box and try to find your own photographic style," says photographer Vassilis Tangoulis (**www.vassilistangoulis.com**). "Search for the messages and feelings you want to express through your photos… Your own style is the mirror of your inner world and this is the most precious gift you offer to all the viewers of your work. Keep your standards really high and never be satisfied with your work. There is always plenty of room for improvement. Be jealous with the work of other artists [because] this means that you can work [harder] and improve your own skills. Don't be afraid to show your work and don't care about the popularity metrics. When you create art you have to satisfy primarily yourself and your feelings of self-completeness."

Photographer Nate Parker (**www.nateparkerphotography.com**) says that it's important for fine art black-and-white photographers to develop a look that's unique. "A top-notch work for me is one where the image resonates with a stop-me-in-my-tracks 'wow, look at that!' sensibility that often, if not usually, includes a sense of individuality where I'll feel like 'I know who made that!' even if I can't remember their name!"

### WORK TOGETHER

It's important for black-and-white fine art photographers to produce work that has a consistent sense of style

All images © Lee Jeffries

© Lee Nutter

# 3 Work with nude figures

## The human form is a classic subject that lends itself perfectly to more creative interpretations

One of the subjects most frequently associated with fine art black-and-white photography is the nude. The use of black and white is particularly important here; it sends a clear message, though it may be a subconscious one, to the viewer that the image is always intended as art rather than as simple titillation.

"A black-and-white image allows us to step back from the figure a bit, I think, and see the form without identifying so closely with the individual being photographed," says photographer E.E. McCollum (**www.eemccollum.com**). "There is something very lovely about the way light on the body is represented in black and white that isn't captured so easily in colour, in my view. The model is clearly a person, but also represents something more, something universal." In this way, fine art black-and-white photography of nudes tends to be sensual rather than sexual, evocative rather than exploitative.

Photographer Lee Nutter (**www.leenutter.com**) explains that the absence of colour is important to his vision. "In some ways, colour photographs give too much away," he says. "I'm looking for raw and honest… I'm looking for a

© Roberto Ojeda

© Roberto Ojeda

© Roberto Ojeda

true representation of the person as I see them… I'll quickly become obsessed with some beautiful aspect of their physicality that I think in some ways is representative of who they are."

Aesthetically attractive subjects can also form the basis of fine art black-and-white photography, of course, but they are often creatively distorted, subverted or abstracted in some way or other so that the viewer is forced to see the subject with fresh eyes – even to the point that they may no longer be sure if they are even supposed to find the subject beautiful or not.

An example of this can be seen in the work of photographer Roberto Ojeda (**www.ojedafineart.com**). Here, the viewer is presented with something as conventionally beautiful as a pregnant woman, but Ojeda has not presented a straightforward depiction of pregnancy. Instead, he has chosen to take a different approach. "When a lovely pregnant lady came to me and told me [she] would like to do some pregnancy photos, but [wanted] something out of the ordinary, I chose flour and a delicate expression to create a photograph that looks like something new and at the same time a distant memory of her first pregnancy… Being fresh and iconic are what makes a photograph unforgettable and in order to achieve this one must be open to experiment often."

In the image seen on the page opposite, Ojeda worked with cling-film. "In this series I tied the subject with the wrap to show how many times we are prisoners of breakable ties and we simply do not realise how our escape is only a decision away. We choose not to see beyond the feeling rather than the reality of refusing to break free. I work a lot and inspiration comes to me when it feels like it. I am always paying attention."

**THE ARTISTIC NUDE**
The human form is a key subject for fine art black-and-white photographers to explore, but the emphasis is always on shape, form and elegance

© E.E. McCollum

© E.E. McCollum

4

# Make use of shadows

## What isn't visible is often more important than what is

Chiaroscuro – the dramatic interplay with light and shade – is hugely important to all art. It goes a long way towards informing the atmosphere of your images and, more practically, directs the viewer's attention towards the key aspects of the scene or those that you wish to emphasise.

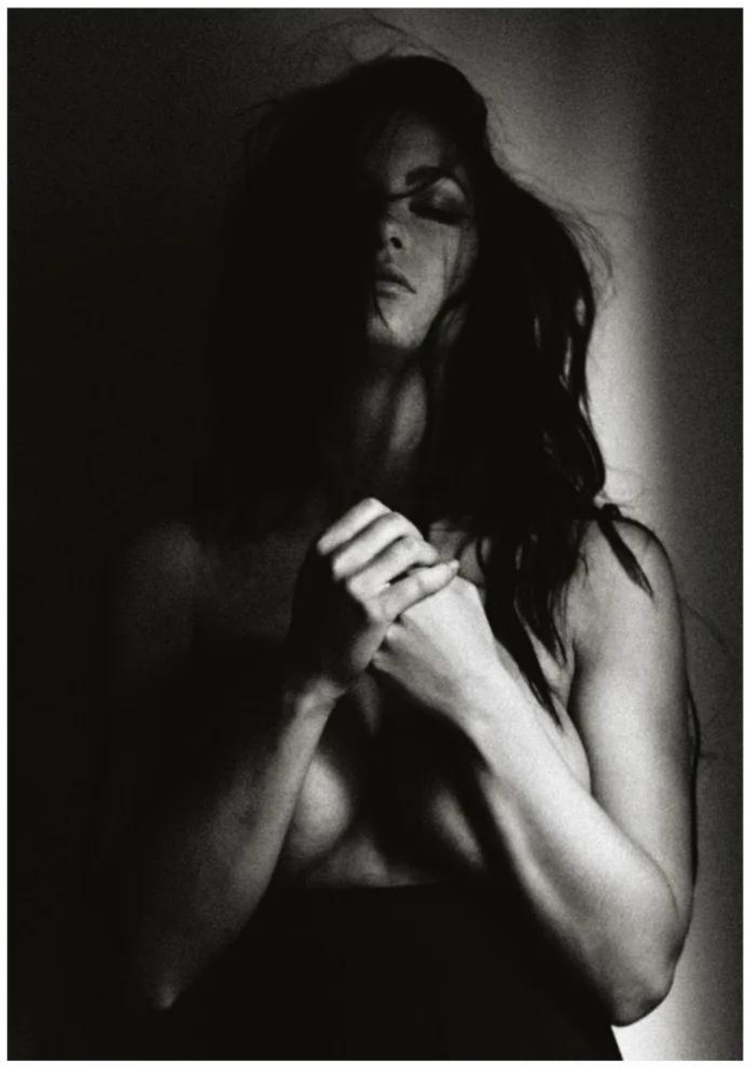
This is extremely important for fine art black-and-white photography – often, you can create a sense of tension in your images by purposely leaving parts of the scene in shadow. This is a technique that can work particularly well with nudes, enabling you to direct the result further away from anything that might be interpreted as too explicit and closer to a more distinctly fine art tone.

Working with just one main light source, such as a window, is the simplest option, but you might also choose to work with two or more lights if you are able to control the spread of light (with snoots or honeycomb grids, for example) very precisely. For a more dramatic effect, hard light will be preferable, while soft light will produce a more subtle result that's more forgiving, but perhaps less striking. Remember that the bigger the light source relative to the subject, the softer the light. Moving a big softbox away from your subject effectively decreases its relative size and therefore makes the light that's falling on your subject harder.

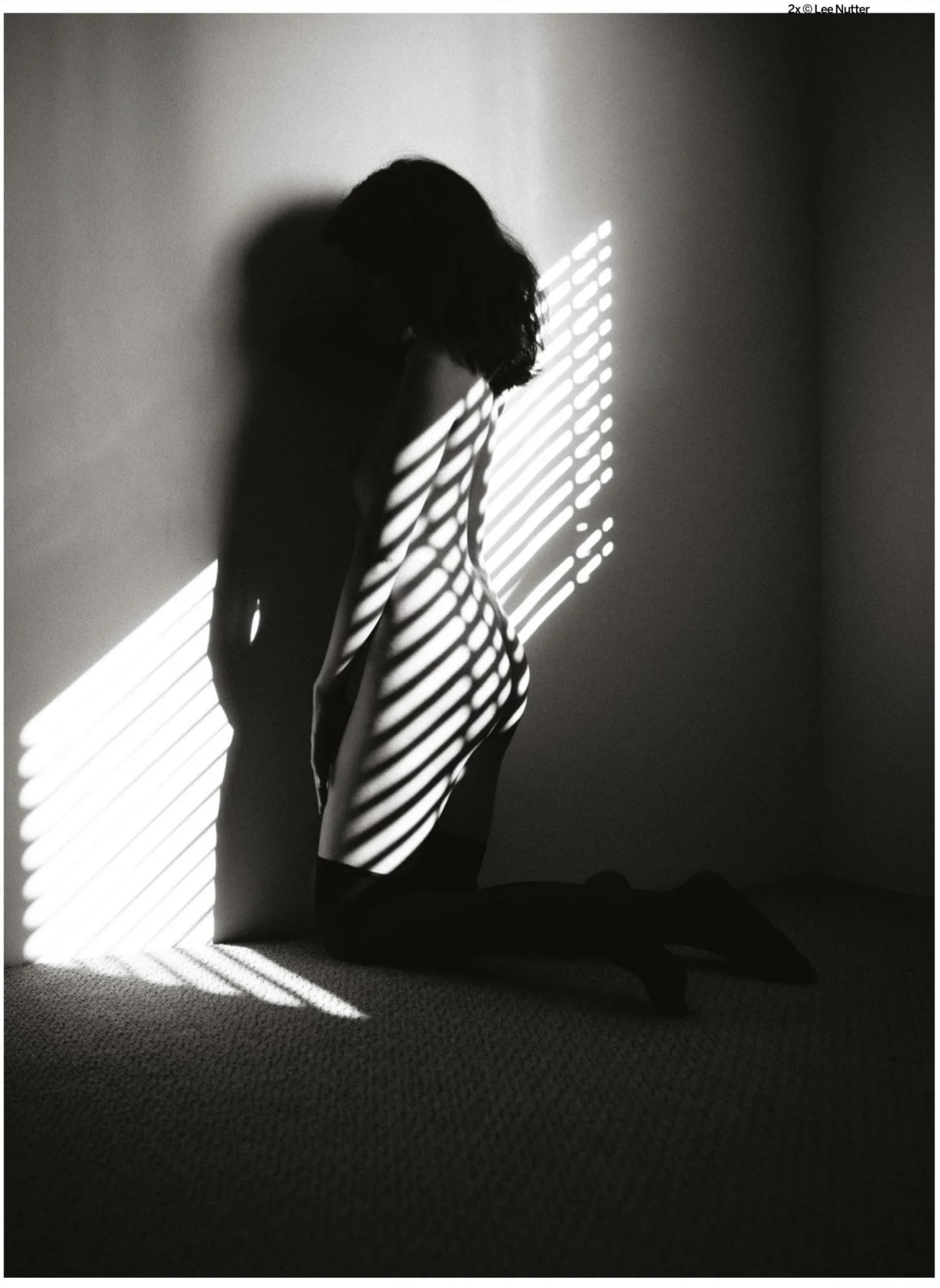
If you are photographing your model in a space with a lot of shadow, your camera's meter may compensate and overexpose the scene, so you might need to use your camera's Exposure Compensation function to underexpose the image.

**CREATE MYSTERY**
The use of shadow enables a sense of mystery and atmosphere to be produced by obscuring key elements of the scene and leaving them to the viewer's imagination

© Mel Brackstone



2x © Lee Nutter



**CONSIDER YOUR FRAMING**
Careful decision-making regarding what you include in the frame enables you to create images that are visually bold

© Roberto Ojeda


© Nate Parker

# 5 Compose selectively

## Focus in on a key element of the subject to create a more visually compelling result

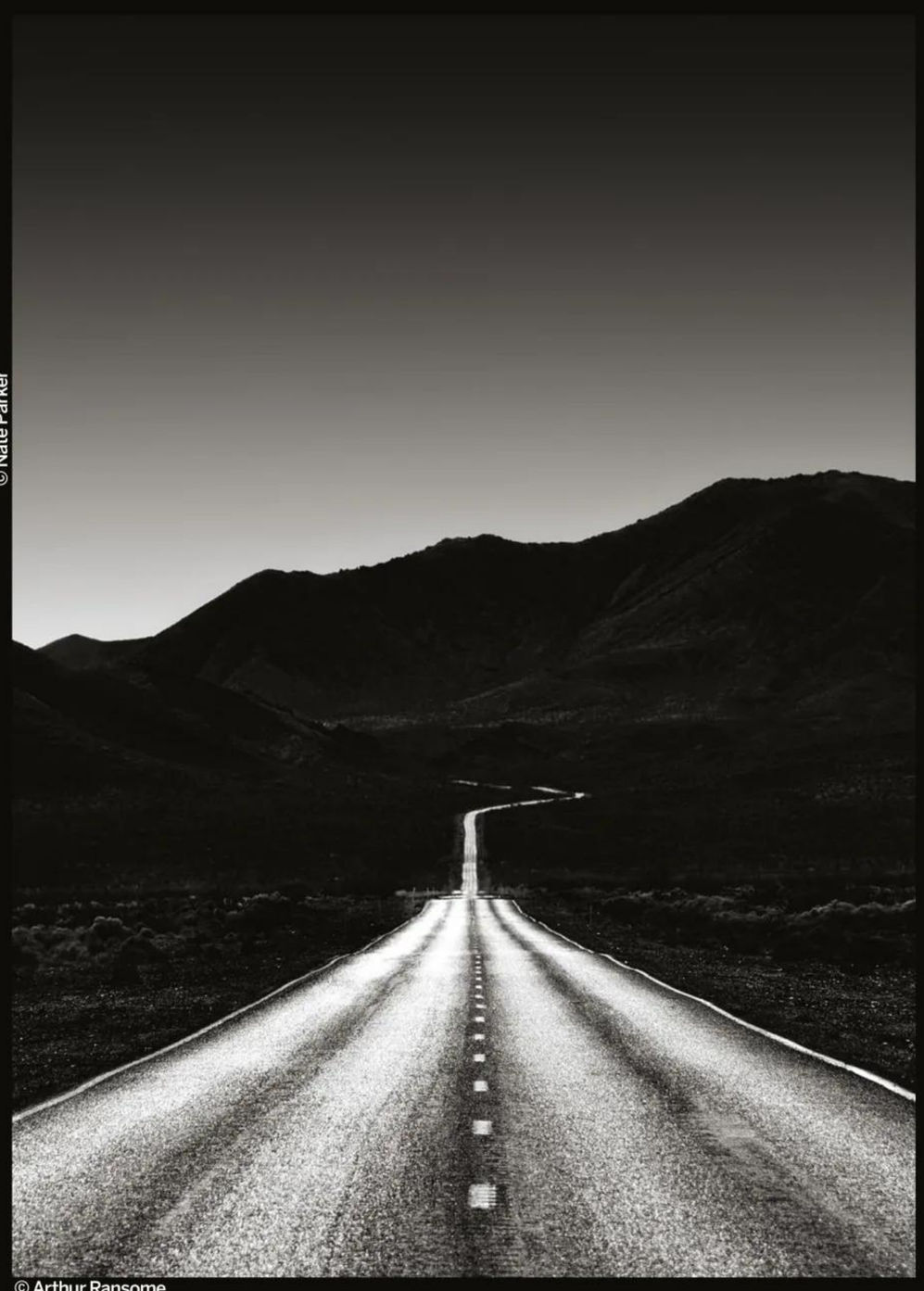
Fine art black-and-white photography is meant to be wilful, with the photographer going out of his or her way to present a particular aspect of something.

It can be tempting to try and incorporate as much as possible in the frame, but being selective with what you include in your compositions is often a better approach to take, particularly if you are attempting to create fine art work. "I want to create photos that look moody with dark places or minimal landscapes with a large portion of negative space to shelter my feelings," says photographer Vassilis Tangoulis.

Choosing just one subject and then presenting it isolated within the frame is one approach that you can use for this. The challenge that this presents you is in creating a balanced-looking composition when you do not have other elements to work with, but with practise this is something that you will find easier to achieve over time. To help with this, pay close attention to what part of the scene or subject moves you most.

"Understanding emotional response is very important when creating images that not only reproduce what you saw, but also what you felt or what you want your viewer to feel," says photographer Arthur Ransome (**www.aransomephoto.com**). "It is important to understand what it is that makes us stop and point our lens at something, which is often something other than what we simply see… It is vitally important for you to be able to form some kind of a connection with the subject you are photographing. This connection requires that you pay respect to the subject, which often means that you sit with it for a period of time before even setting up your camera to shoot. Study the scene in front of you. Develop connections."

Another approach is to photograph only a specific part of your subject. This can be very effective when applied to fine art black-and-white nude studies. Rather than photographing the model's entire body, you might choose to photograph only their legs, or just their lips and mouth.


© Arthur Ransome

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© Vassilis Tangoulis


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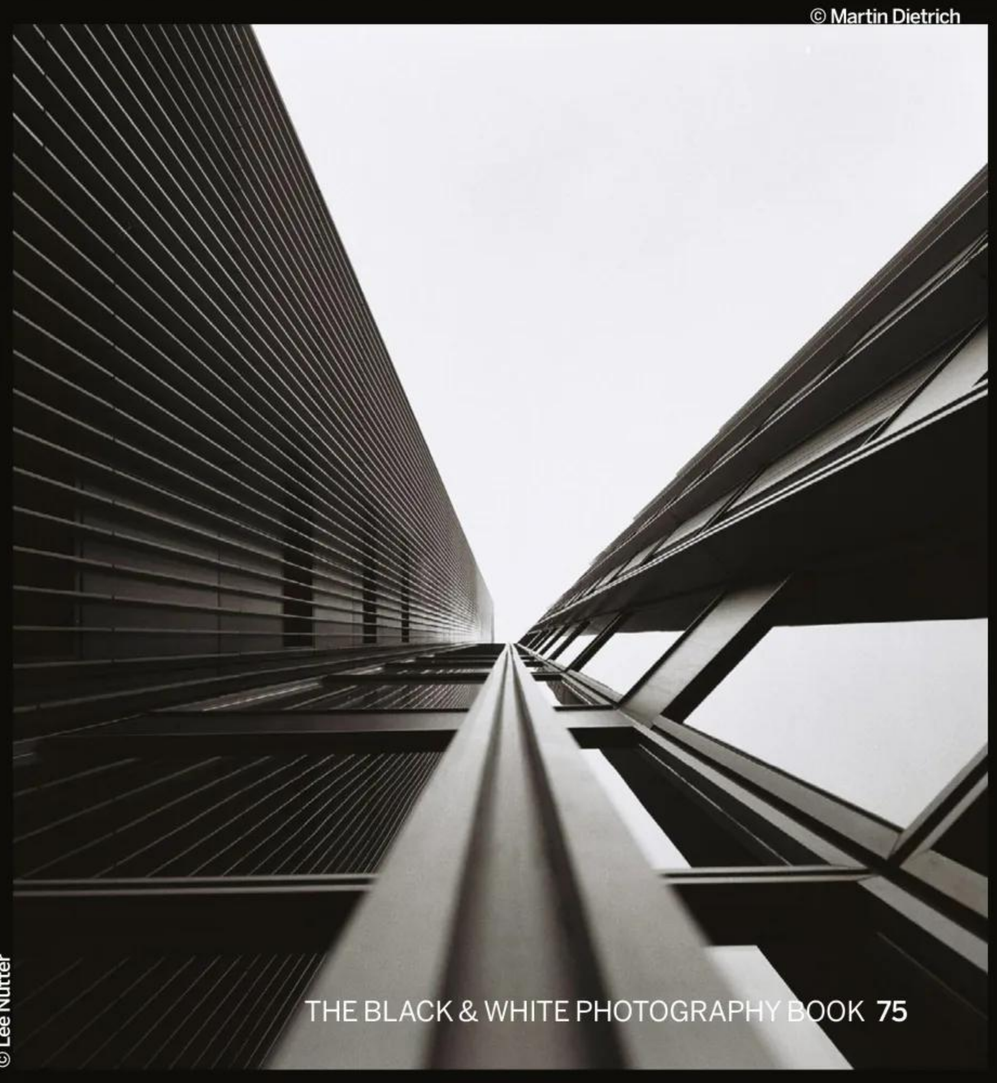

© Martin Dietrich

# 6 Use creative optics

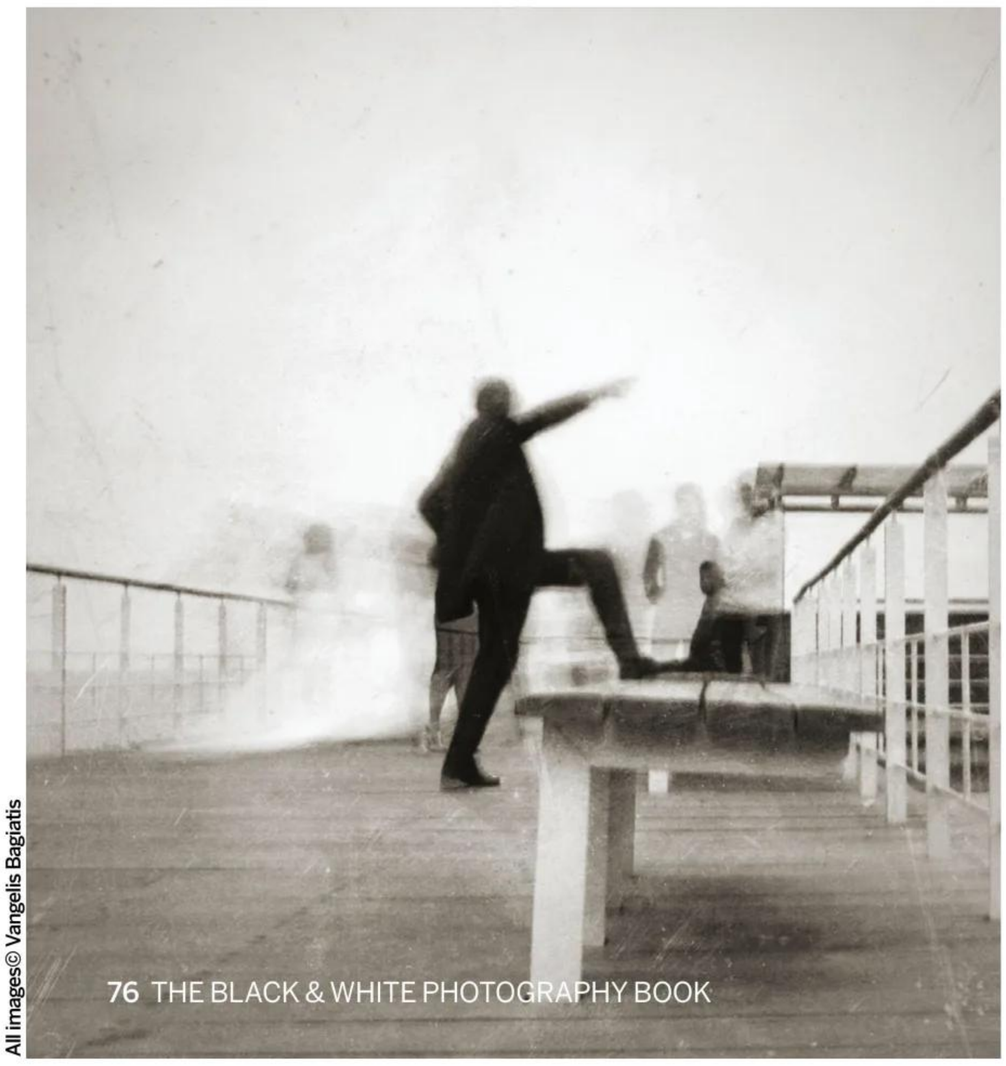
## Explore a world beyond the conventional arsenal of lenses that are normally employed

As a photographer, you can also subvert or distort through your choice of equipment. Don't worry: you can use absolutely any type of camera you want for fine art black-and-white photography – though, if your ultimate goal is to produce fine art prints, you may well want to consider using a full-frame sensor for the increased dynamic range and improved noise control that such cameras enable.

Here, we're talking principally about lenses. Short to medium telephoto lenses – usually focal lengths ranging from no wider than 50mm through to around 135mm – are often favoured by portrait photographers because, in comparison to a wide-angle focal length such as 24mm, they do not distort facial features. However, photographic convention and veracious representation of a subject are not necessarily the prime focus of fine art mono.

With this in mind, fine art black-and-white photographers may decide to capture their portraits using wide-angle focal lengths in order to distort their subject's features and use this to add a sense of the grotesque to their work. Alternatively, other fine art black-and-white photographers favour the use of the Lensbaby range of lenses, which enable a wide variety of optical effects that are reminiscent of the view cameras of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

"Lensbaby is a special type of tilt-and-shift lens that creates a blurry distortion at parts of an image which are out of focus," says Vangelis



All images© Vangelis Bagiatis

Bagiatis (**www.500px.com/vbagiatis**). "What I like about Lensbaby lenses is that they help me create a dreamy, sometimes even surreal, effect and add mood to my pictures… The use of Lensbaby lenses, along with a shallow depth of field, blurs certain parts of a photo, helping in making it look like a memory or a dream. I also like to apply subtle textures on my images that, in combination with black-and-white conversion, adds a hint of nostalgia. I find this especially effective when applied on blurry and dark parts of an image."

Some photographers even use handmade lenses. "I use Lensbaby, [Lomography] Petzval, Helios and handmade lenses to produce sensual nudes and portraits," says Mel Brackstone (**www.instagram.com/melbrackstone**). "I love soft portraits, and I love blur. I like to add some mystery with blur or shadow, and occasionally will try to make a story-telling image. I use all my lenses wide open, so f2-f3.5… Occasionally, I'll use the Sony lens which is f4, but I then blur it in post-production." Experimentation is the key, as shooting with a Lensbaby or something similar is very different to shooting with a regular optic and considerable trial and error will be required.

**CREATE ANOTHER WORLD**
Photographer Vangelis Bagiatis uses a combination of Lensbaby optics and careful processing to produce results that look like snapshots from a dream

## Experiment with a Lensbaby

### Caroline Jensen explains how to achieve a fine art feel

**1 Wait to tilt** Manual focus lenses come with a complete set of skills unique to manual focusing. Most Lensbaby lenses have a unique blur, even when not tilted. Spend time getting comfortable with the properties of the lens and how to handle it prior to tilting the lens or adding any additional attachments.

**2 Exhaust your efforts on one tilt** Tilt your lens in one direction and shoot hundreds of frames in many light and subject scenarios. Review the images on the computer and make assessments of what you love and what did not work for you. Repeat this process, with the same tilt, until you can visualise your shot prior to shooting.

**3 Use Live View to zoom in and focus** Better yet, use a mirrorless camera with a high-quality EVF.

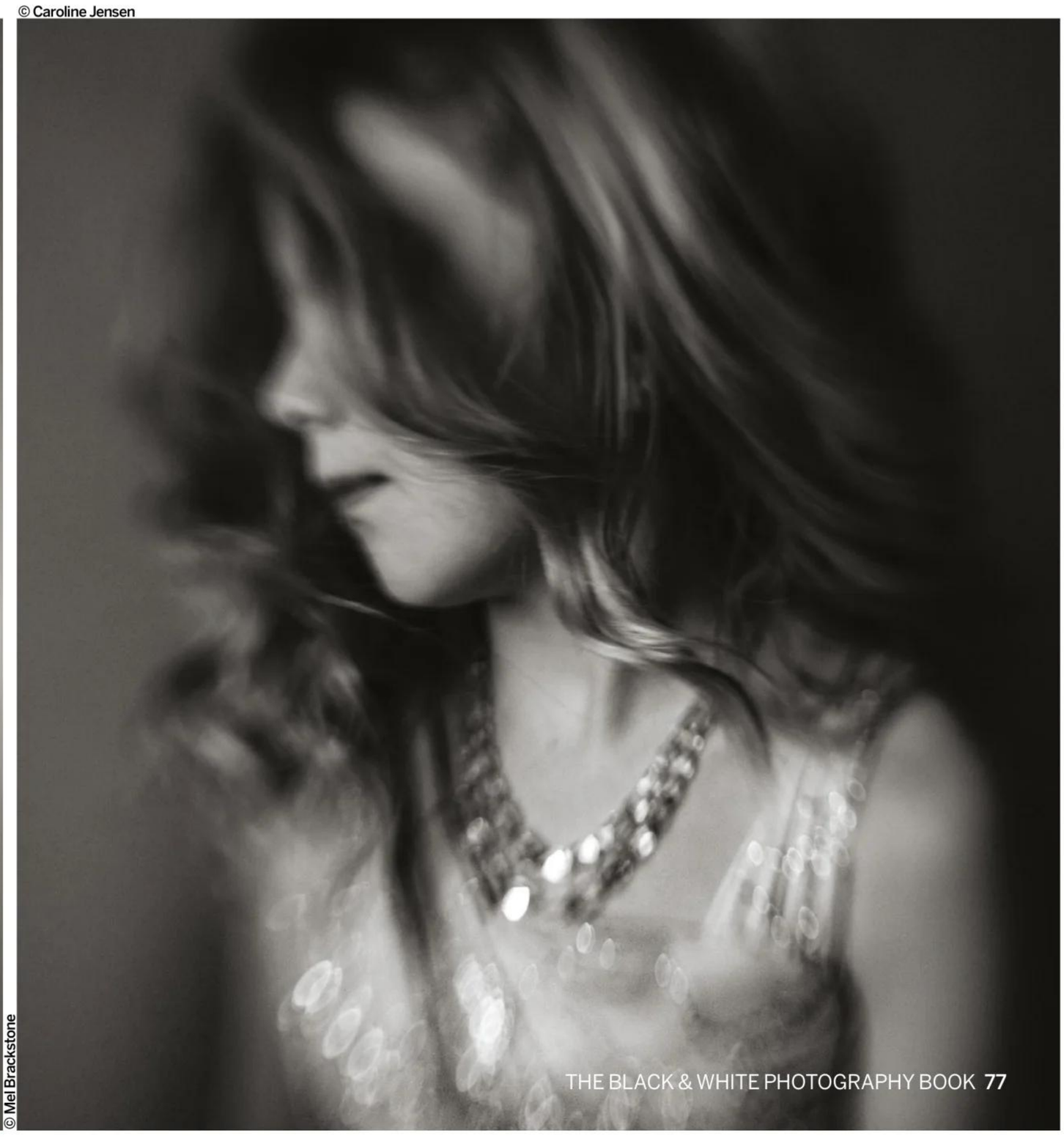
**4 Shoot in simple settings** Many Lensbaby lenses can distort objects in the out of focus areas. This can drag the eye away from your subject. A blank wall or neutral backdrop can absorb some of the blur to minimise chaos and keep the attention on the subject.

**5 Convert to black and white** To continue the process of simplifying the frame and adding drama to your image. Directional light is of utmost importance, so be sure to shoot all around your subject to find the angle works. Deep shadows can absorb extra blur.

Caroline Jensen offers a tutorial on Lensbaby lenses www.clickinmoms.com/cmu/step-by-step-with-lensbaby.

© Caroline Jensen

© Mel Brackstone


© Caroline Jensen

# 7 Multiple exposure effects

## Use multiple exposures in-camera to replicate a traditional film technique

Fine art monochrome photography is often about presenting the viewer with a non-literal depiction of the world – showing them something that they can recognise, but abstracted in some way.

Even if you decide not use a creative optic such as a Lensbaby, you can still create effects in-camera that are ideally suited to fine art black-and-white photography.

One setting that's definitely worth exploring is Multiple Exposure mode. This can be found in most DSLRs and CSCs on the market, although the number of variables that you have control over does vary considerably. The basic principle behind this is that you can layer different exposures into the same image, something that could be achieved with a film camera by simply not winding the film on to the next frame after an exposure.

More often than not, you only need to layer two separate exposures to achieve an appealing effect; any more is generally too much, but always experiment to see what you can achieve. To make your digital camera function the same way as a film camera, ensure that Auto Gain is switched off. With Auto Gain set to on, the camera will try to intelligently even out exposure differences between your frames. However, try both and see what works best for the effect you are trying to produce.

© Martin Dietrich

### WORK WITH FLASH

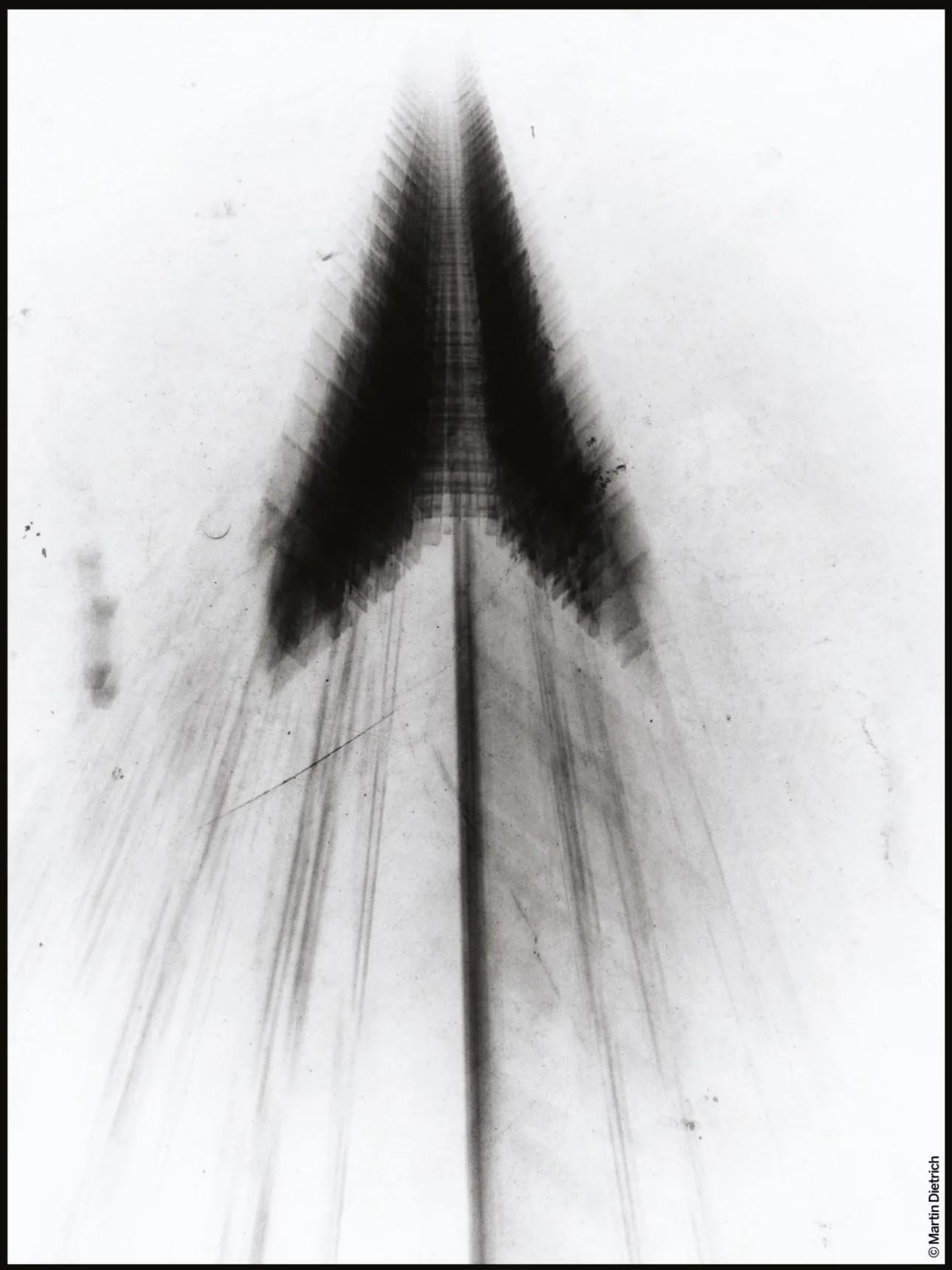
The use of a rear-curtain sync on your speedlight also enables you to create a double exposure effect, which is a great alternative technique to explore

### MAGIC AND MYSTERY

The use of double exposures is a means of creating fine art black-and-white photography that shows the viewer an alternate version of the world

### CREATIVE PEOPLE SHOTS

If you want to create fine art black-and-white portraits with a twist, try experimenting with in-camera double exposures



© Martin Dietrich

© Nate Parker

**SKETCH EFFECT**
This image demonstrate's Dietrich's technique of moving the camera during a long exposure in order to create an abstract effect reminiscent of a pencil sketch

© Matej Michalik

**REDUCE THE ELEMENTS**
Long exposures are a means of reducing the number of individual elements that are identifiable in an image, as this photo by Nate Parker demonstrates

© Nate Parker

**THE MAGIC OF MOTION**
Photographer Matej Michalik employs long exposures, created with the use of ND filters, to add a simultaneous sense of movement and tranquillity to his work

**TREE MOTION STUDY**
"I call it 'jumping up and around while making the photo,'" says Nate Parker. "It comes in handy when all else is lost"

# 8 Go abstract with long exposures

## Use slow shutter speeds to make the ordinary look extraordinary

You can seek to create a sense of movement into the image using various shooting techniques, all of which hinge around the use of a long exposure.

Although it may not spring immediately to mind for this purpose, you can use your speedlight flash to abstract a portrait. Rear-curtain sync mode instructs the flash to fire at the end of an exposure. For the best results, use a long exposure to blur any movement, but freeze the action when the flash fires. You could either combine this principle with continuous light or, in an otherwise dark space, manually fire a flash two or more times while your model moves.

Long exposures are inherently difficult to achieve in bright ambient conditions, but neutral density (ND) filters solve this problem. Commonly, these are used in combination with a tripod to ensure the camera is completely stable throughout the exposure, and this is an approach that many fine art monochrome landscape photographers take in their work. Indeed, this can be an effective way of simplifying the composition, as suggested earlier. "I often use ND filters for my work," says photographer Matej Michalik (**www.matejmichalik.com**). "Using long-exposure techniques I am able to see the things in a way that can't be seen by a naked eye. I never combine more exposures into one and neither do I use Photoshop for blurring water or sky… I use very strong ND filters, usually two at the same time. That is the way I get the exposure time from two to four minutes even during the day. Thanks to that water and sky are blurred at the photo. The longer exposure time, the creamer effect I get."

However, you can put an even more creative twist on the use of ND filters, as photographer Martin Dietrich (**www.martindietrichphotography.de**) explains. "I'm working on a new series right now wherein I use overexposure caused by slower shutter speeds (1/15 to 1 sec) together with carefully shaking and dangling my camera, resulting in photos that look like abstract sketches."

This technique enables you to create all manner of different effects. Once again, it's highly dependent on experimentation and repeating any particular look precisely is close to impossible – but this is part of the charm of the technique.

All images © Pierre Pellegrini

# 9 Explore different aspect ratios

## Don't restrict yourself to the 4:3 or 3:2 format that your camera captures by default

When it comes to fine art monochrome captures, using a less conventional aspect ratio is an important component of how to establish and maintain a consistent style and look. There is something very unique about the square format, for example, in terms of the way that the eye explores the frame compared to a rectangular aspect ratio, and so it's no surprise that many fine art photographers favour it. Shapes often become much more compelling in the square aspect ratio and truly making good use of the entire frame is also possible in a way that's much harder with a rectangle.

"For all my images, be it water, countryside or winter sceneries, I choose square format, black and white, and long exposure," explains Pierre Pellegrini (**www.pierrepellegrini.ch**). "These three features simply take me to a world invisible to our eyes, detached from a reality, which, on the other side, is well represented by rectangle format and colour photography. This kind of reality sometimes does not suit me, and this is the reason why I try to escape the real world creating images that allow me to imagine, dream, fantasise about my personal dimension, in a world made of peace, solitude and quiet. Being able to convey these feelings to other people is part of my goal."

If you are serious about shooting in a square format, Pellegrini recommends not leaving this consideration to the post-production stage. "I take most of my photos with a Hasselblad with Phase One P20+ digital back, the only square format back for long exposure shots," he says. "As a matter of principle, I do not agree with cropping rectangular photos into square format. In the beginning, I had to accept the compromise but, over time, I managed to find a digital back, which allowed me to obtain the ultimate square format."

**BE SQUARE**
The use of an aspect ratio other than the more commonplace rectangular formats is highly suitable for fine art black-and-white

# 10 Consider tonality

## Process your images with care and don't rely on quick desaturation techniques

How you treat your images in post-production is extremely important. "Some decades ago fine art photographers would own a darkroom and the required skills to develop their own films," says Vangelis Bagiatis. "They wouldn't rely on somebody else to give the final form to their original vision. Nowadays, the same is true with the digital darkroom. Every fine art photographer should master at least the basic techniques to digitally develop their RAW files and not rely on predefined camera profiles or pre-made filters and templates."

Pay attention to the nuances of tonality of your images and recognise that you are working with many shades of grey, not just black and white. "I believe that black-and-white fine art photography has more 'colour' than colour photography because of the proper use of the multiple variations of grey. The Zone System, introduced by Ansel Adams and Fred Archer, if treated correctly, can reveal much more depth and drama than colour can offer," explains pro photographer Vassilis Tangoulis. "I work mainly with Photoshop CC to convert my photos into black and white and for my post-production of my photos. I work on tonal processing, adding many layers that help me to treat certain regions of the photo differently and also pay special attention to contrast treatment. I found out that mastering these two workflows helps me to give the pseudo 3D perspective to my photos. Also I work a lot with gradient masks and the light treatment using luminosity masks is always a key factor in my post processing workflow." Remember, however, not to take your processing further than necessary.

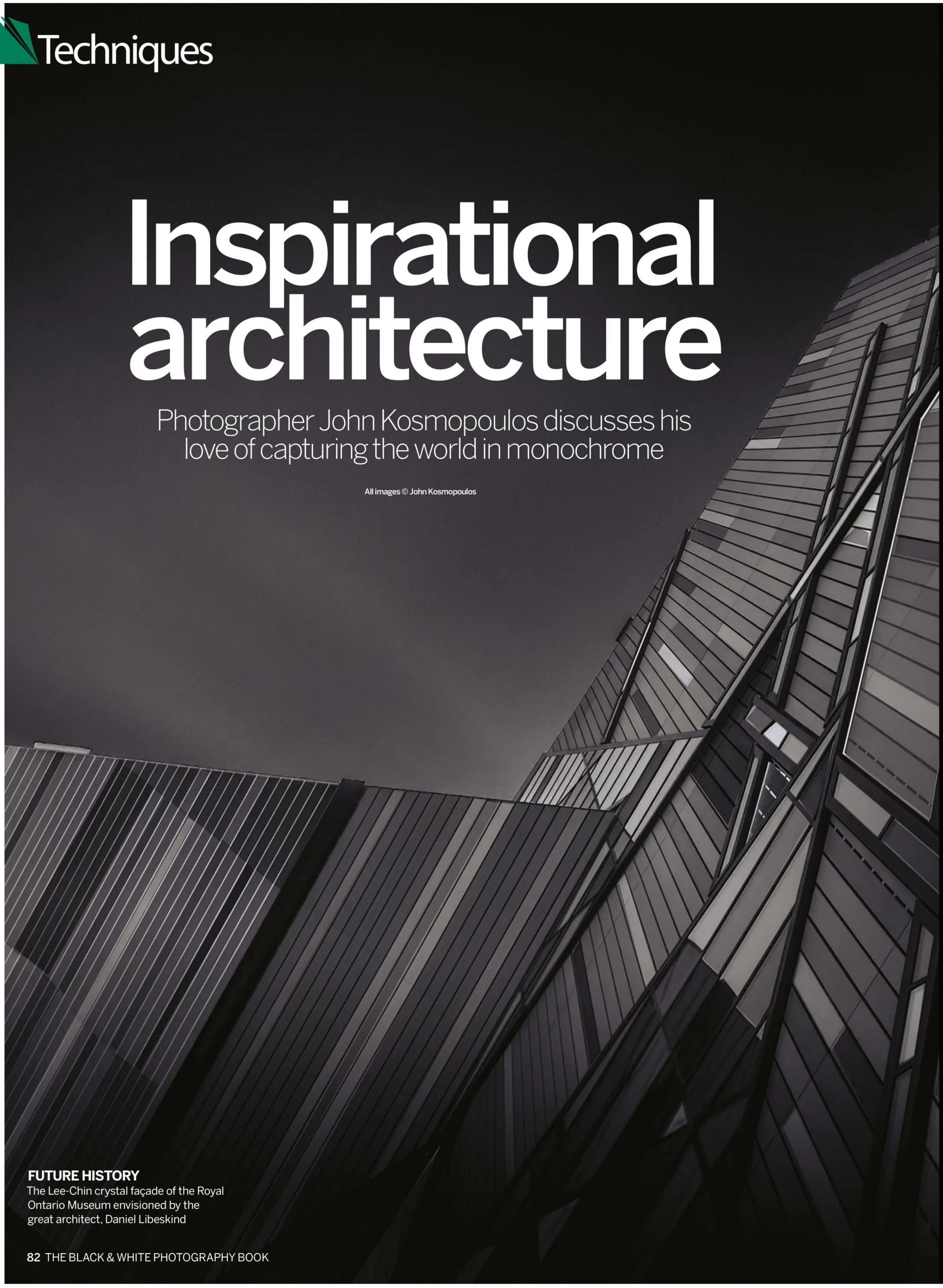
© Roberto Ojeda

**SILVER EFEX PRO 2**
Many black-and-white photography devotees favour working with Silver Efex Pro 2, a plug-in for Photoshop CC and Lightroom that provides a vast amount of creative options

# Inspirational architecture

## Photographer John Kosmopoulos discusses his love of capturing the world in monochrome

All images © John Kosmopoulos



**FUTURE HISTORY**
The Lee-Chin crystal façade of the Royal Ontario Museum envisioned by the great architect, Daniel Libeskind

# Inspirational architecture

**For some photographers, it's all about capturing plenty of bright, vibrant colour, but for John Kosmopoulos (www.silverzenphotography.com), it's all about looking beyond colour into the true essence of a scene.** "Black-and-white photography offers a means of simplifying and silencing the complexity of any moment while offering an emotive and sometimes ethereal quality to the experience," he explains. "Seeing in black and white gives you the ability to combine the substance of what the subject actually is with the essence of what else the subject could be."

Kosmopoulos has loved photography for a long time. He explains, "I was always fascinated by the promise of photography to fufill something in me and to balance my life. I have become lost and found in its pursuits. My interest in photography began when I picked up a Kodak Tourist Camera from an antique store for ten dollars. The camera didn't work, but it made me research photography in my early twenties. During my first trips around Europe, I picked up a Sony digital camera to take my first real photographs at the turn of the millennium. The combination of beautiful scenery and the ability to record my experiences for posterity through artistic expression enthralled me. I was hooked on photography at that moment."

For Kosmopoulos, black and white represents a "sometimes bold leap into a parallel reality… The great thing about digital photography is that you can often shape elements of a scene in accordance with your own photographic vision. What I do look for is how colour can be replaced by tones and textures, and how contrasting and luminous effects can add dimension and depth to any photograph. I also look for the geometry of a scene for composition and patterns that create shapes that I harmonise within the frame and highlight when I am in the digital darkroom. When I take photos of architecture, for example, I do consider how the light and shadows create interesting effects on the building and the surrounding urban ecology, but I don't often feel

**CLOUD SEEDER**
"One of my first architectural images taken in the Financial District of downtown Toronto"

**DUBAI MARINA**
"A six-photo panorama of the marina with the twisting Infinity Tower as a focal point"

the need to study the scene for hours to get the best possible black-and-white photograph for that scene – I do consider the time of day and weather."

Kosmopoulos likens a successful black-and-white photograph to a symphony in terms of how different elements harmonise and take the viewer on a journey. "If you consider my Skógafoss long-exposure photograph of the famous waterfall in Southern Iceland, which has been photographed by thousands of photographers, it is a study of graduated contrasts and selective luminosity across elements… Simultaneously, it is a study of the graduated importance or presence of elements that I want the viewer to notice while fading all other elements to make them almost extraneous and non-existent. What you notice first in the photograph is the waterfall and then you gradually notice the inner cavern, the silhouetted people, and the trails of water and rocks that are demarcated along a crooked leading line. By taking this approach, it gives the photo a visual cadence of its own, similar to the movements of a symphony."

Long exposures, in particular, appeal to Kosmopoulos and are a key component of his signature style. "Long-exposure photography captures the fourth dimension of time in surreal ways: the clouds stream across the sky, waters become velvety smooth and sometimes people become ghosts or disappear altogether, depending on how long you set your exposure. This type of photography is an artistic choice for me, but it is something that I have come to enjoy tremendously. My Future History photograph of the Lee-Chin Crystal exterior of the Royal Ontario Museum, envisioned by the architect Daniel Libeskind, in my home city of Toronto is a good example of the long-exposure technique, but also the way I like to deliteralise a common scene and make it my own. My long-exposure technique is based on a method I teach participants and those I mentor in my fine-art long-exposure workshops, that I have come to call my '4-8-16 method': an average of at least four minutes at an f8 exposure for sharp images with 16 stops of neutral density filtration (for

"Seeing in black and white gives you the ability to combine the substance of what the subject actually is with the essence of what else the subject could be"

# A closer look behind the camera

## John Kosmopoulos explains the thought process that goes into his imagery

### TIME TO FACE THE WORLD, TORONTO

*Time To Face The World* is part of my 'Fifth Element' series of photographs depicting double portraits as a decisive moment where both the individual and the surrounding architecture act as primary and interchangeable subjects simultaneously to produce a harmony of photographic vision and voice, to tell a story about overcoming the anxieties of our times and embracing the promise of our collective future. This photo, along with my *Skogafoss* image, appeared on billboards in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

### WARP SPEED, DUBAI

*Warp Speed* is part of my 'Dubaiisms' series using a deliteralist or almost surrealist approach. It was my way of translating the feeling I had when I experienced the rush of traffic along the E11, Sheik Zayed Road… And envisioning these cars materialising out of hyper-speed from the pulsating long exposure clouds… I enjoy this image is because it is the first time I combined a conventional photograph with a long exposure.

### SKÓGAFOSS, ICELAND

Skógafoss is an iconic emblem of the beauty that flows out of every part of Iceland. As a long-exposure photograph, the image is a fusion of physical perception, and autobiographical and metaphorical insight where the how and what of taking a photograph becomes secondary to why we make the photograph the way we do to better understand our motivations as artists. It is my way of creating a parallel world that embraces the paradox that reality is both negotiable and essential to fine-art photography.

# Kosmopoulos' top tips for perfect black and white

- **Shoot RAW** This will help with maintaining as much information in your images as possible to be able to make nuanced and malleable enhancements.

- **Work in 16-bit** Edit your photos as 16-bit files as you will obtain a broader and deeper level of tones.

- **Think black, grey and white photography** Focus on varying grey tones in your images with special emphasis on the midtones as they add a vibrancy.

- **Look for 'LEICA' patterns** Look for lines, edges, intersections, contrast and angles in the shapes, light and shadows of the global and local elements of a photo to create a harmonious composition.

- **Use Black-and-white mode** If you are having a challenging time visualising a scene in black and white, use the Black-and-white mode while shooting RAW.

- **Work with zonal shape systems** Many of us are familiar with the linear spectrum of the zonal system of highlights, midtones and shadows that we see in the dynamic range of an image through the histogram, but we do not often think of it in terms of a system of complementary tones, much like in colour... Consider the system as a triangle for high-key images or an upside down triangle for low-key images.

- **Make Levels and Curve adjustments** I tend to use both tools within selections and the overall image to enhance the contrast differentials within the image.

- **Consider presence and absence** I often consider what subject or parts of an image I want to enhance with luminosity (presence) to make them stand out more while making other parts of an image that I don't want the viewer to focus on, fall into the shadows (absence).

- **Use HSL Panel** Use the HSL (Hue/Saturation/Luminance) panel in Camera Raw or Lightroom for black-and-white conversion to maximise tonal ranges. The red channel, in particular, will offer an almost infrared quality to your images.

- **Print your work** Always consider your photo as if you are going to print it. It may look good on your screen... But the true test is the printed image. Sometimes you have to boost the contrast and sharpening.

those interested, I use a 16-stop Formatt Hitech Firecrest filter). This method was developed as a starting point for daytime long-exposure photography based on an analysis of my settings with many of my long exposure photographs. I always shoot at 100 ISO in RAW format with my camera for maximum control of adjustments across highlights, midtones and shadows in my images."

On occasion, Kosmopoulos also experiments with infrared. "I have also delved into infrared long-exposure black-and-white photography (IR-LE-BW) for landscape photography. My Ice Tree photograph of a lone tree in Southern Iceland is an example of where this type of photography can offer hauntingly beautiful and dream-like qualities. Where the surrounding greenery seems covered with snow and the blues of the skies absorb the light with darker tones when the infrared image is converted."

For those who want to improve their own black-and-white photography, Kosmopoulos recommends mastering a particular subject matter before going on to explore as wide a range of subject matter as inspiration. "One of the first things I impart to others about improving their black-and-white photography is to focus your efforts on the type of subjects that interest you as a photographer and once you achieve a level of prowess in that area, embrace other possibilities and genres of photography to generalise those skills across a variety of fine art pursuits."

Don't just rely on one subject matter for your monochrome captures, however, as Kosmopoulos recomends pushing yourself artisticlly. "[Some] photographers tend to focus on a specific genre of black-and-white photography, but I like to expand my skills as I believe that the truest measure of an artist's growth is their ability to translate the beauty of moments across subjects and to delve into their discomfort zone more to find a higher inspiration with greater aspirations... I also like to impart to burgeoning photographers that innovation and evolution in photography is not only about where no one else has stood, but to stand where others have stood and sometimes take a similar photo from the same angle with the idea to make it uniquely your own, your signature as an artist... Some other considerations are to focus on principles and not rely on rules of photography too much and to think in a series of photos rather than individual photos. This will help broaden your perspective on a subject or theme using dynamic compositions."

In the future, Kosmopoulos wants to add to his portfolio of mono masterpieces by visiting Europe again. "I am hoping to explore the many gifts of the United Kingdom in the near future and to re-experience Iceland. I am also looking forward to doing more workshops nationally and internationally, and to further explore current projects, partnerships and offers for gallery exhibitions."

**WORLD TRADE CENTRE**
A study in the principles of using composition and editing techniques to create dynamism in an image

# Shoot your best BLACK & WHITE

## Learn how to compose striking monochrome images with impact like the best of the professionals

When did you last see a black and white photograph that really inspired and excited you? More importantly, who took it – you? It's very easy to get complacent, reaching a point where you can produce work that's technically excellent and creatively sound, but is still lacking that all-important 'wow' factor.

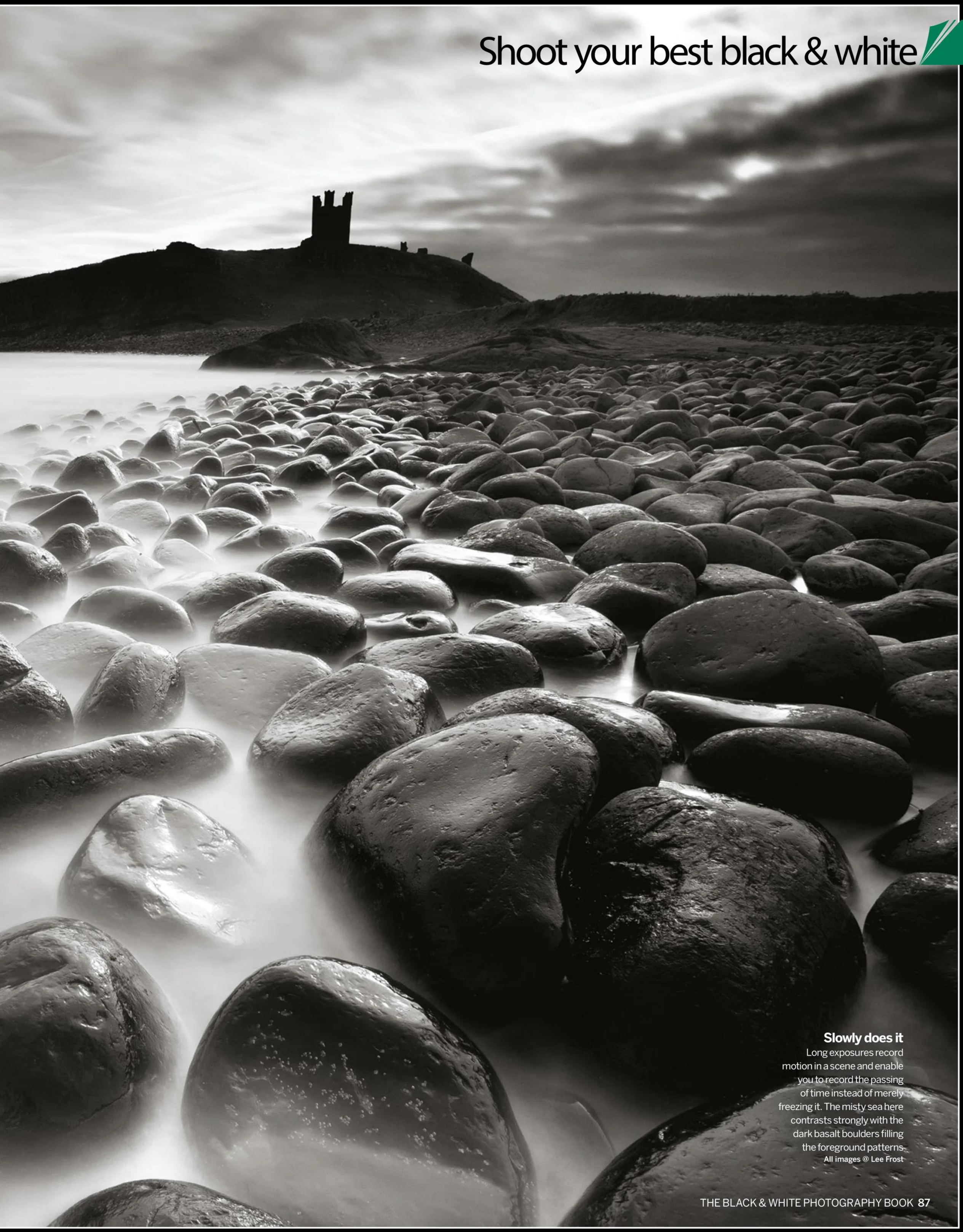
Putting a finger on exactly what it is that elevates an image from average to amazing is difficult, simply because there are so many factors involved. The lens you choose, the quality of the light, the angle you shoot from, the proximity to your subject – all these factors can either add impact or take it away.

Henri Cartier-Bresson's best-known photographs have impact, but it's very subtle and a result of careful timing to capture the 'decisive moment', rather than because he was photographing high drama. He took ordinary, everyday scenes and elevated them to fine art: a family picnicking on the banks of the River Seine; a man leaping over a puddle; a grinning child walking down the street clutching two bottles of wine.

Although Cartier-Bresson's images appear to be spontaneous, as though he wandered the streets, shooting on the move and stumbling across the picturesque scene, he was actually far more premeditated, composing a scene to make use of geometry – lines, curves, shadows, shapes and frames – then waiting for someone to step into that 'geometric pattern'. As he said in his book *The Decisive Moment*, "Photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organisation of forms which give that event its proper expression."

In contrast, American photographer William Klein, one of the fathers of street photography, was renowned for rejecting the rules of photography – using blur in his images, getting up close and personal with a wide-angle lens so you feel like you're part of the story rather than a voyeur looking in. His compositions are often cluttered, with multiple points of interest. They seem raw and unplanned, sometimes technically flawed, but that gives them a vibrancy and urgency that few manage to achieve.

Over the next few pages, we will explore the factors to consider when shooting and editing a black and white image with impact, along with tips on how to really upgrade your monochrome shots to compete with the pros.



**Slowly does it**
Long exposures record motion in a scene and enable you to record the passing of time instead of merely freezing it. The misty sea here contrasts strongly with the dark basalt boulders filling the foreground patterns

**All images @ Lee Frost**

**SURROUNDINGS**
Location carefully chosen so the subject would be backlit by the setting sun.

**AUTOFOCUS**
Servo AF was used so the lens continually adjusted focus to keep the cart and driver sharply focused.

**EXPOSURE**
Test shots were taken to make sure the main subject didn't record in silhouette due to the brightness of the sun.

**HEAD-ON**
A sequence of shots was taken as the cart travelled towards the camera and the best frames were chosen for editing.

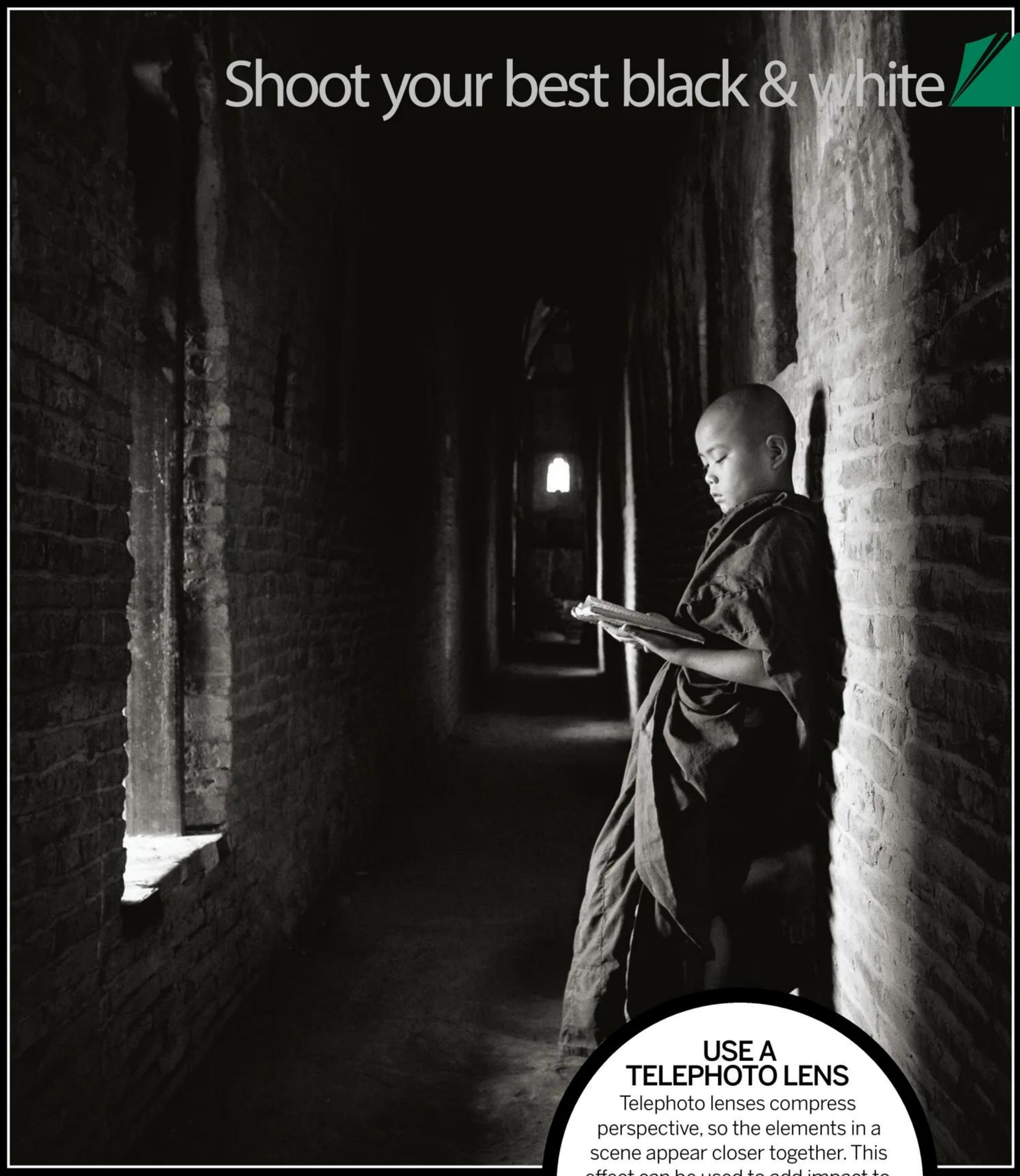
**A MOVING SUBJECT**
A fast shutter speed (1/1,000sec) was chosen to make sure the moving cart was captured sharp.

# Complete the picture

How exactly do we go about producing black and white images with impact when faced with everyday subjects? It could be argued that a lack of colour makes it more difficult to achieve the level of drama that we seek. After all, colour has great symbolic and emotive value. However, as wonderful as colour photography is, it can also be too familiar. It shows us what things look like and leaves us feeling reassured and comfortable. But in art, reality isn't always the best solution because it doesn't encourage us to look beyond familiarity and appreciate an image for any reason other than what it depicts. As soon as you remove colour from an image, everything changes because it no longer represents reality. It's an interpretation of the world, rather than a copy.

Black and white images are more dramatic, more evocative and more atmospheric. Our emotional response to a colour image is often rendered superficial by a sense of familiarity, but our reaction comes from a much deeper place when we take that colour away. Light, shade, texture and shape take centre stage and what's actually in the scene becomes almost irrelevant. Good black and white images inspire the viewer to complete the picture in their mind's eye.

The late French photographer Lucien Clergue photographed a diverse range of subjects, from bullfights in his hometown of Arles to circus children. However, he's probably best known for his depiction of the female nude. In the 'Nus Zebres' series he photographed models in New York; the use of shadow patterns and contrast transformed his images into poetic abstracts where light and shade take centre stage.

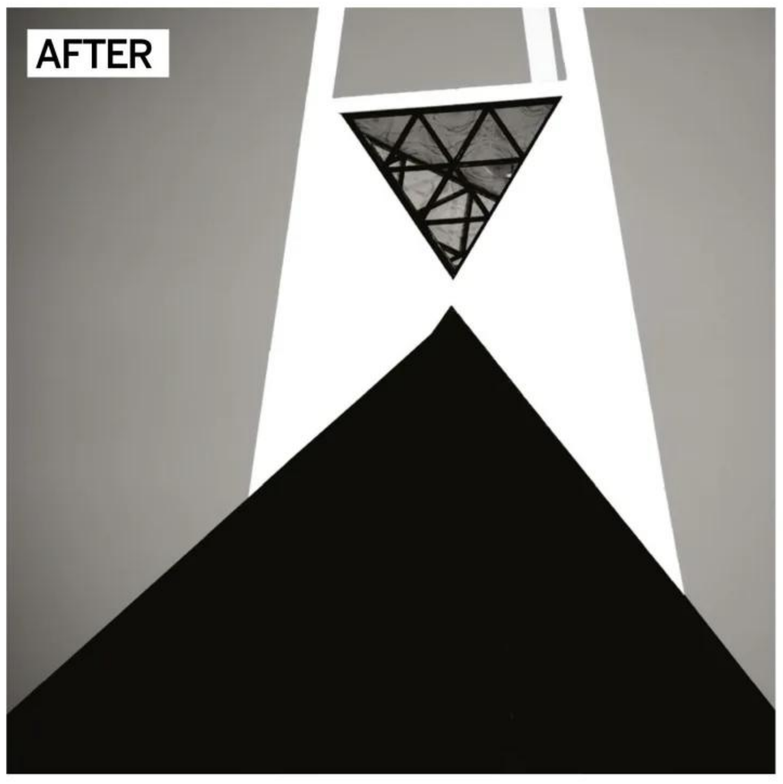


*Above*
**Travel inspiration**
There's nothing better than travel to open your mind and improve your skills as a photographer. Exploring different countries and cultures will expose you to amazing photo opportunities

**USE A TELEPHOTO LENS**
Telephoto lenses compress perspective, so the elements in a scene appear closer together. This effect can be used to add impact to an image because everything in the shot seems to be crowded together. Distant features also loom large in the background and dwarf smaller features closer to the camera.

# Take an abstract view

Abstract images gain their appeal not from the fact that you can identify the object recorded, but from the shapes, patterns, tones and textures that make up that object. This means that literally anything can be used as the basis of an abstract image. Look for criss-crossing lines, overlapping shapes and eye-catching angles. Forget about what the subject is and focus on how the elements in your camera's viewfinder can be organised in an interesting way. Experiment, and don't be afraid to let important elements break out of the frame, or reduce the composition to a bare minimum.



# Seeing in black and white

Purists insist that in order to produce meaningful black and white photographs you must 'see' in black and white – step beyond the realism of colour, strip your subject down to its bare bones and previsualise how the final image will look as a monochrome print.

There is some truth in this, but it doesn't have to be the Holy Grail. If you're exclusively a black and white photographer then you're going to become attuned to seeing the world in black and white – looking at a combination of colours and instinctively knowing how they're going to translate to shades of grey, for example. You will also set out with the intention of finding subjects that appeal to your monochrome vision.

However, the reality is that few of us fall into that category – we just love going out into the world, shooting pictures, and while the majority of them remain in full colour, some end up as black and white simply because they work better that way.

Does that mean those black and white images are going to be inferior? Not necessarily. The post-production control you have over a digital image file today means that creative decisions can be made long after a photograph has been taken.

The master of pre-visualisation was the legendary landscape photographer Ansel Adams. His large-format black and white prints of the American West, primarily Yosemite National Park, have inspired for decades. Adams was a technical genius, and helped to devise the famous Zone system that enabled him to set the exposure for an image based on how he previsualised the final print to look. His first 'pre-previsualised' image was 'Monolith, the Face of Half Dome', made in Yosemite in 1927. Adams made that image using his last glass plate and put a red filter on the lens to boost contrast and darken the sky. He later said, "I had been able to realise a desired image: not the way the subject appeared in reality but how it felt to me and how it must appear in the finished print". That print launched his career and changed the face of landscape photography forever.

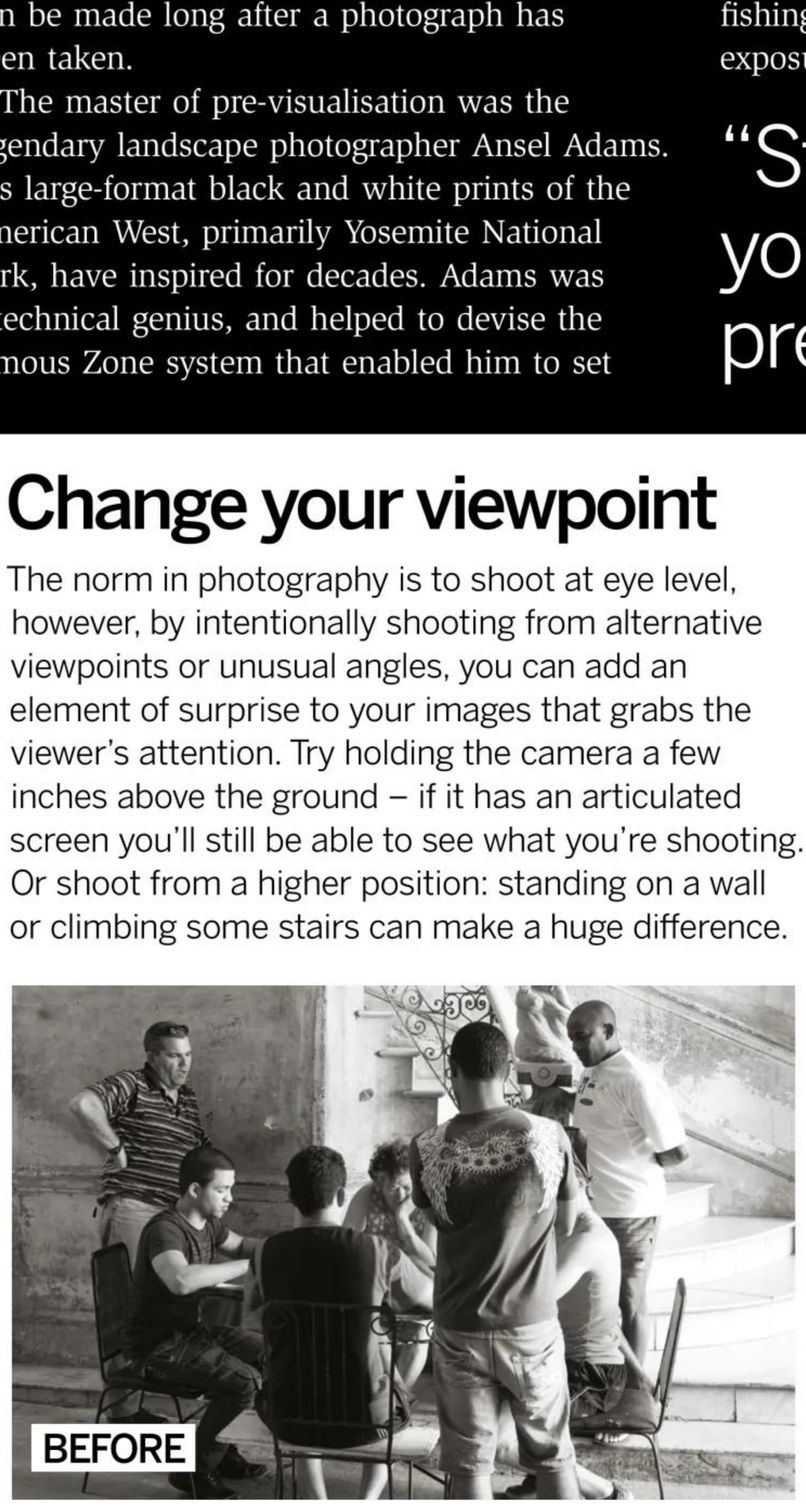
Another master of the landscape image is British photographer Michael Kenna. Kenna's work gains impact through simplicity and purity. He attempts "to evoke and suggest through as few elements as possible, rather than to describe with tremendous detail".

Kenna primarily shoots and prints in the square format, which adds those wonderful elements of symmetry, balance and tranquillity to his resulting images, and often his compositions are distilled down to the simplest forms – a single tree in a snowy landscape, or fishing nets out at sea captured with a long exposure, for example.

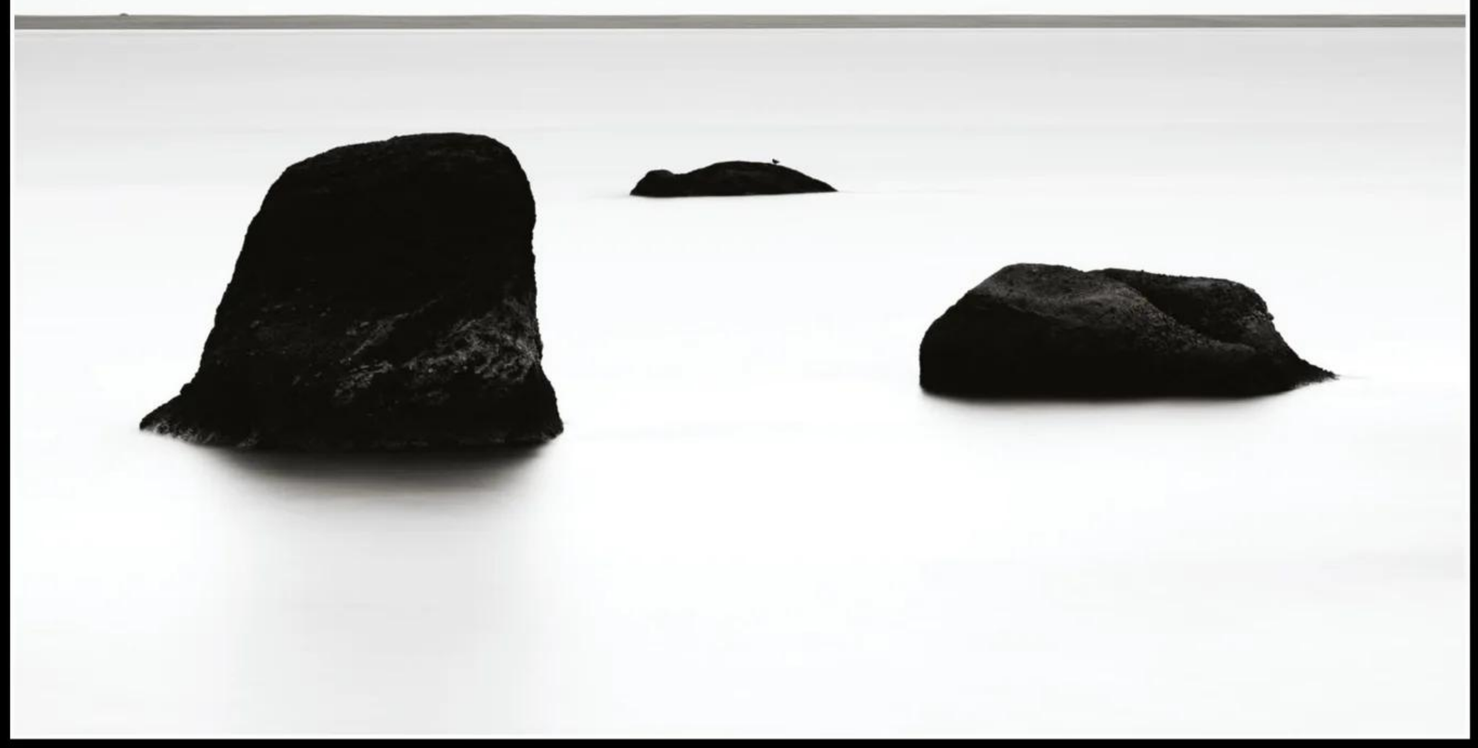
"Step beyond the realism of colour, strip your subject down to its bare bones and previsualise how the final image will look"

## Change your viewpoint

The norm in photography is to shoot at eye level, however, by intentionally shooting from alternative viewpoints or unusual angles, you can add an element of surprise to your images that grabs the viewer's attention. Try holding the camera a few inches above the ground – if it has an articulated screen you'll still be able to see what you're shooting. Or shoot from a higher position: standing on a wall or climbing some stairs can make a huge difference.



# Shoot your best black & white



*Left*

**Repeat after me**

Use patterns and repetition to add impact to your images. This is easier to do in black and white because there's no colour to distract. Increasing contrast during post-production is an effective way to boost shadow patterns

*Above*

**Quirky compositions**

Don't always strive to capture scenes in a familiar way. Black and white is unrealistic by its very nature, so make the most of that by looking for unusual subjects, or shooting the ordinary in a way that makes it extraordinary

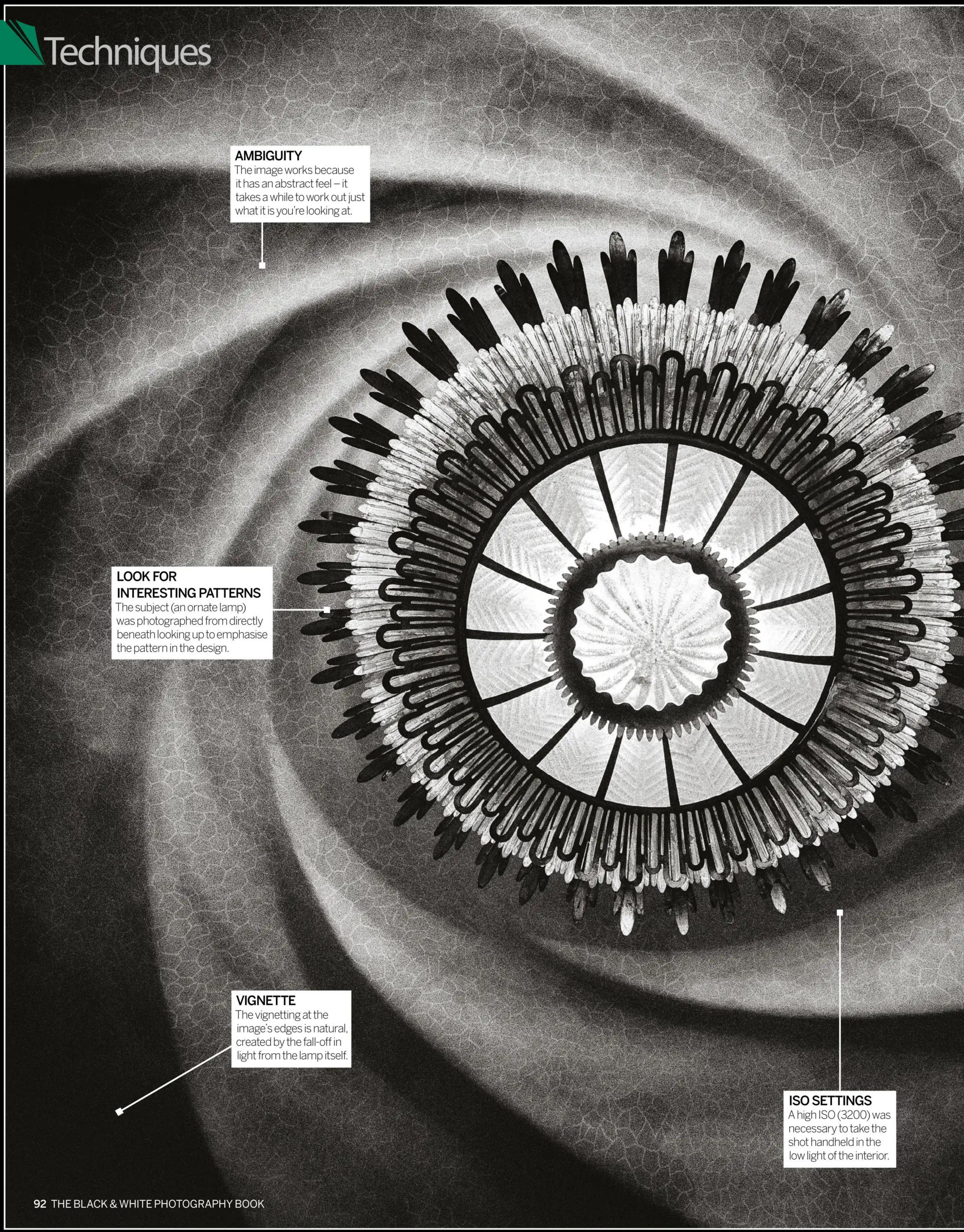
**TIMING**
This shot was carefully timed so the cyclist didn't obscure the graffiti on the wall.

**PERSEVERE**
It took several attempts to get this shot right – a good example of 'if at first you don't succeed, try, try again'!

**MOTION BLUR**
Shutter speed carefully chosen to blur the cyclist by just the right amount.

**TWEAK IN POST**
Contrast boosted during post-production to make the image punchier.

**CONSIDER THE FRAME**
The edges of the image were darkened during post-production to help frame the revolutionary graffiti.



**AMBIGUITY**
The image works because it has an abstract feel – it takes a while to work out just what it is you're looking at.

**LOOK FOR INTERESTING PATTERNS**
The subject (an ornate lamp) was photographed from directly beneath looking up to emphasise the pattern in the design.

**VIGNETTE**
The vignetting at the image's edges is natural, created by the fall-off in light from the lamp itself.

**ISO SETTINGS**
A high ISO (3200) was necessary to take the shot handheld in the low light of the interior.

*Above*
**Celebrate the ordinary**
Though travel is exciting and inspiring, you can produce fantastic images on your doorstep. The great thing about shooting locally is you can go back to the same locations time after time and make the most of dramatic light and weather

**CROP IT**
Although best practice is to try and compose your images in-camera as you want them to be, don't be afraid to crop during post-production if doing so will produce a stronger image. Cropping can tighten up a 'windy' composition and get rid of unwanted elements. A square crop can also transform the look and feel of an image.

# Make a feature of the sky

When we shoot landscape images, we often tilt our cameras down to make the most of foreground interest, and the sky becomes nothing more than a sorry slither running across the top of the frame. In many situations, this approach is necessary as a boring sky dilutes impact. But there will be times when the sky is more interesting than the landscape, and that's when you need to change your approach, tilting the camera up instead of down so the sky is celebrated in all its glory.

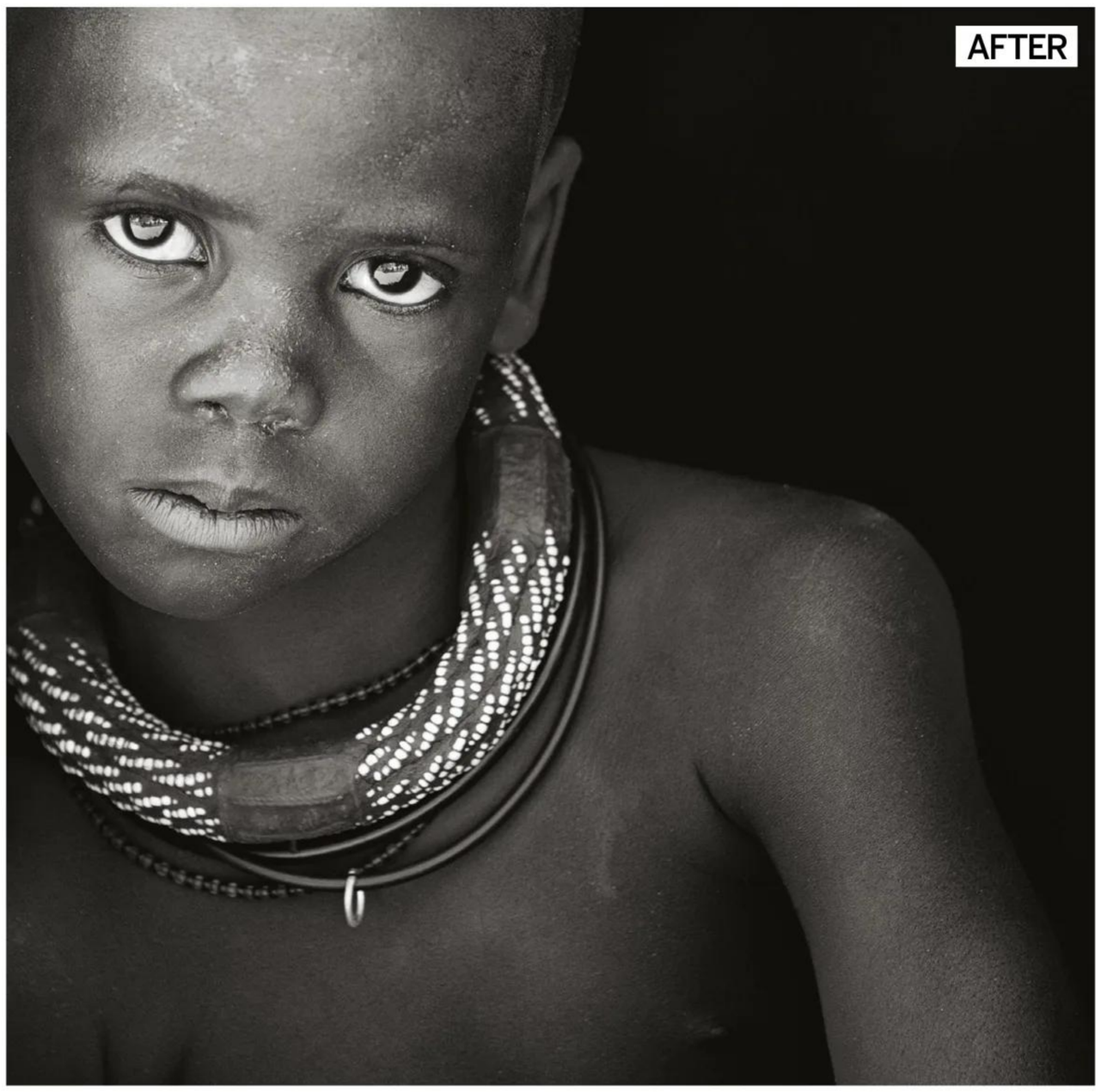
# Strength from simplicity

Putting yourself into the right mindset to ‘see’ in black and white can be tricky, but it’s an obstacle that can easily be overcome. You could set your DSLR to Monochrome mode then shoot in both RAW and JPEG – the image you see on your camera’s preview screen will be black and white, so you’ll have a good idea of how the scene translates, but you’ll also have a colour RAW file on the memory card which you can work on later. The other option is to shoot as normal, in colour, then decide later which images you want to convert. Some will work, others won’t, but there’s no reason why you won’t end up with some great images.

Ultimately, photographs of any subject can have impact if you want them to, whether it’s a landscape, a close-up or a portrait. All it takes is confidence and commitment. You need to approach the subject purposefully, be prepared to take creative risks, make mistakes, push your skills to the limit and see what happens. As Michael Kenna once said, “Nothing is ever the same twice because everything is always gone forever, and yet each moment has infinite possibilities.”

## Move closer

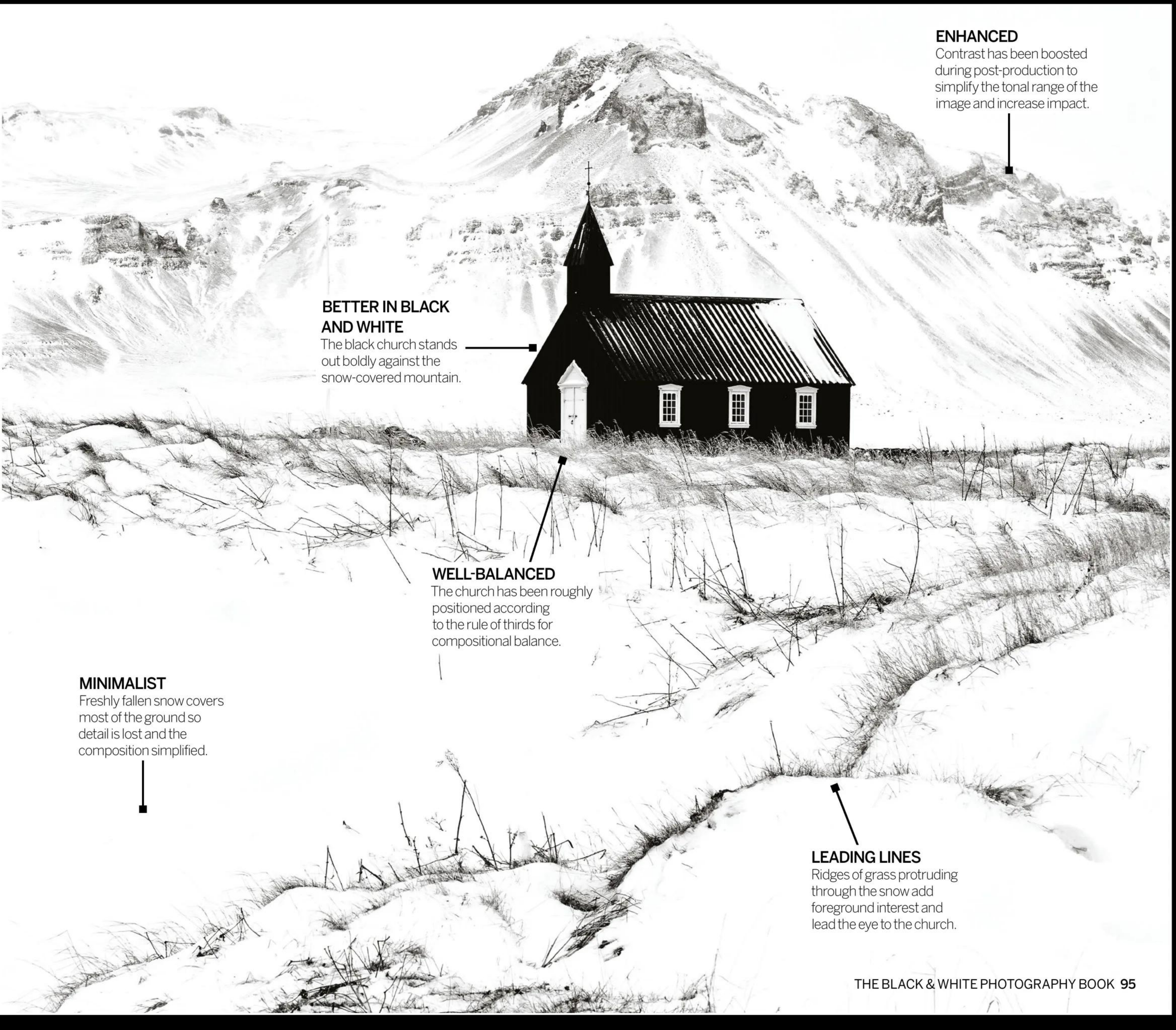
“If your pictures aren’t good enough, you’re not close enough,” so said the late great Robert Capa. It’s a useful maxim to adopt no matter what subjects you shoot. Not getting close enough is perhaps one of the biggest mistakes photographers make. Landscapes with no foreground interest, portraits surrounded by unnecessary space, candids snapped from too far away... There seems to be a fear of getting up close and personal to the subject, but it makes a huge difference to the impact of the final image.

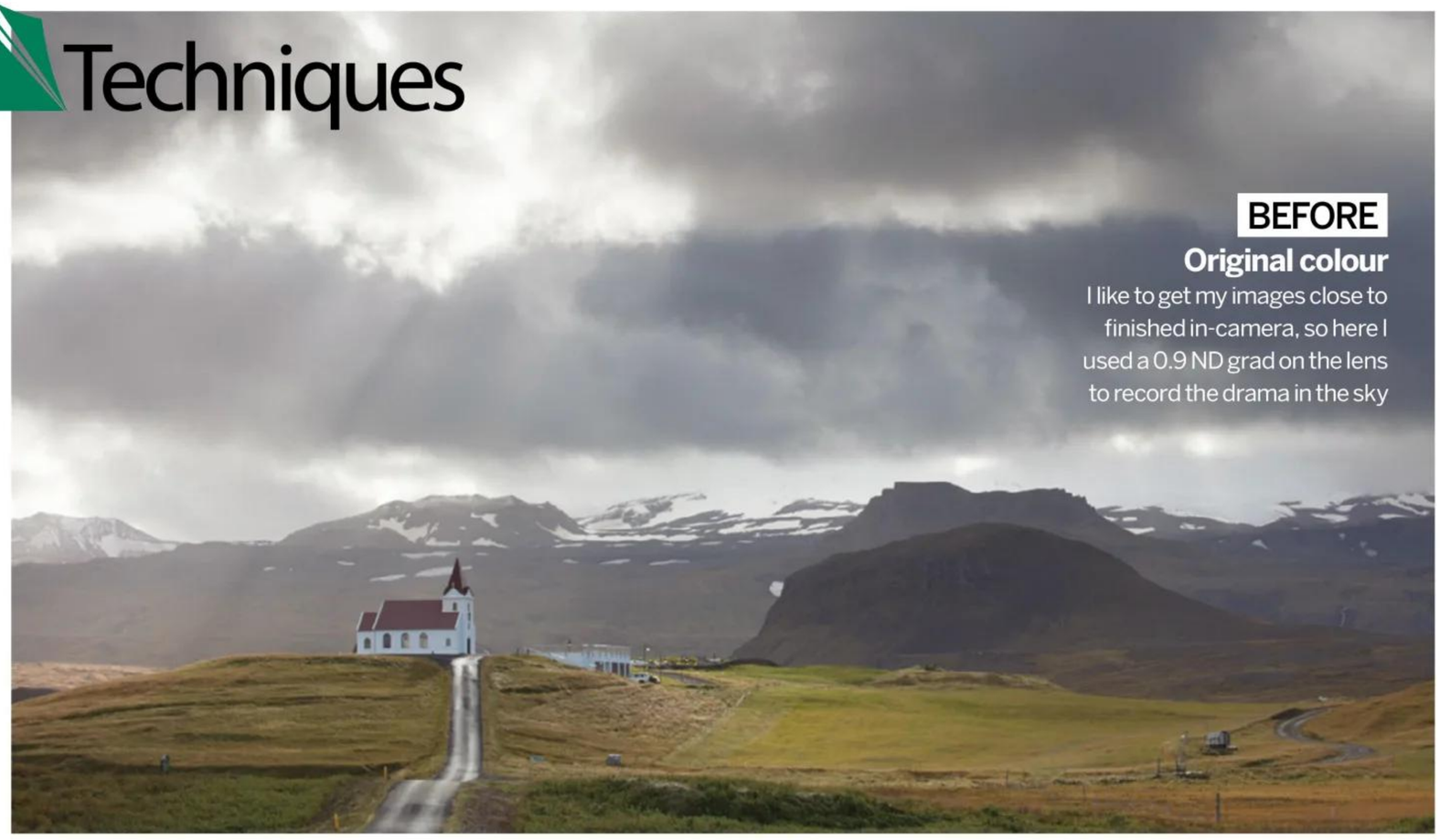


# Shoot your best black & white

*Right*
**Wide views**
Wide-angle lenses add impact to any image due to the way they exaggerate perspective. Use lines to lead the eye into the scene – converging lines work best, and shoot from a low position to really emphasise foreground interest

*Opposite*
**Keep it simple**
Simple compositions have impact because they deliver a more direct message. Winter is a great time to shoot minimalist images because snow covers the landscape and hides all but the boldest features


ENHANCED
Contrast has been boosted during post-production to simplify the tonal range of the image and increase impact.
BETTER IN BLACK AND WHITE
The black church stands out boldly against the snow-covered mountain.
WELL-BALANCED
The church has been roughly positioned according to the rule of thirds for compositional balance.
MINIMALIST
Freshly fallen snow covers most of the ground so detail is lost and the composition simplified.
LEADING LINES
Ridges of grass protruding through the snow add foreground interest and lead the eye to the church.



**BEFORE**

**Original colour**

I like to get my images close to finished in-camera, so here I used a 0.9 ND grad on the lens to record the drama in the sky

# Be bold

Producing black and white images with impact requires confidence, especially when it comes to image editing. Unfortunately, many photographers are too subtle about the whole process and end up with lacklustre results.

What you need to do is forget about realism. Black and white isn't realistic, so your images don't have to be. We're not suggesting that you go over-the-top for the sake of it, but just because a photograph started its life looking rather flat and subdued, it doesn't mean it has to stay that way. Throw caution to the wind. Let your creative hair down. Be brave!

**AFTER**

**Conversion**

Only basic editing was required to maximise the drama and impact of the original image. That sky is biblical!

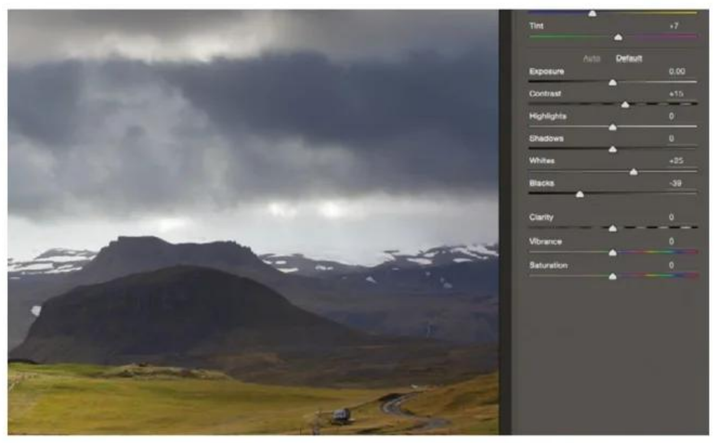
# Shoot your best black & white

The final image may bear no resemblance to the original, but if it says what you want it to say, then that's absolutely fine!

There are numerous applications you can use to convert colour images to mono at the touch of a button. One of the best is Silver Efex Pro 2, part of the excellent Google Nik Collection (available as a free download online from **www.google.com/nikcollection**)

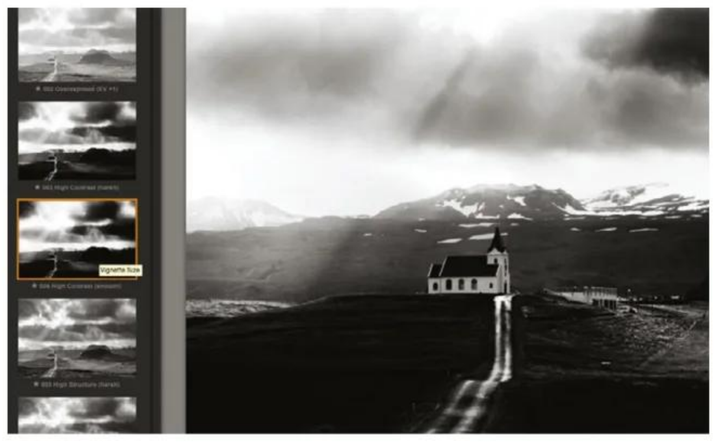
The High Contrast and High Structure presets are ideal for producing punchy, dramatic black and white images if you want a quick fix, while the colour filter effects are handy for boosting contrast and changing the tonal relationship in the image.

**1 Open the RAW file** This shot was taken in stormy conditions so the unedited file does show potential for being a powerful black and white image. However, to maximise the drama of the scene it's going to need gutsy editing.

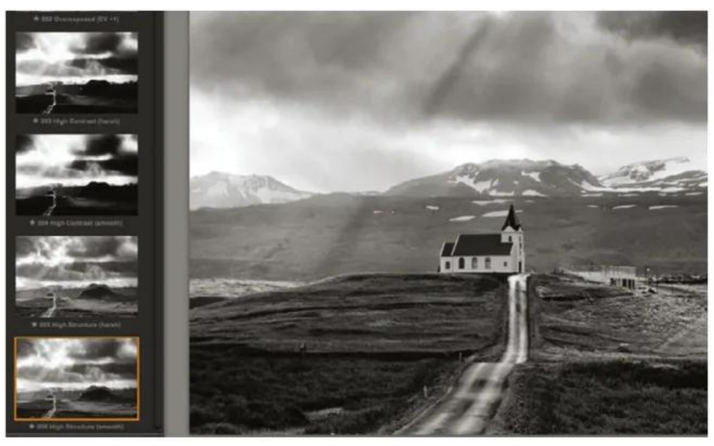


**2 Make basic adjustments** In ACR, click the Auto tab to see what effect this has on the image. Contrast is given a slight boost, but that's about it. Lens Corrections are then applied and the image opened in Photoshop.

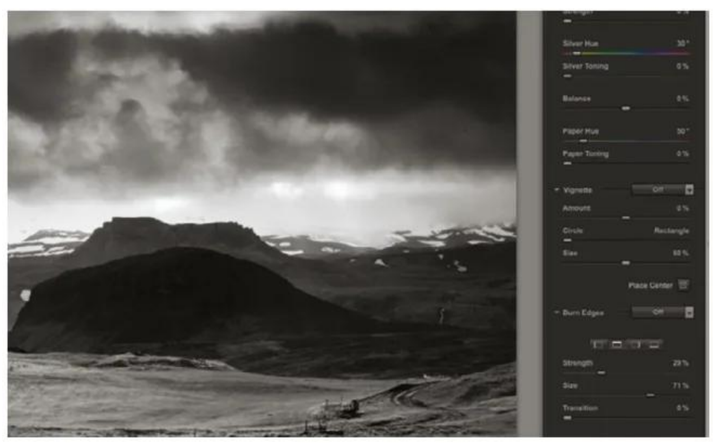
**3 Convert to B&W** Save the image as a 16-bit TIFF then open in Silver Efex Pro 2 (Filters>Nik>Silver Efex Pro 2). This is how the basic black and white version of the image looks. It's not bad, but lacks 'wow' factor.



**4 Work on the look** Clicking on one of the High Contrast presets, you can see the effect is way too harsh, with the bright areas of the sky blowing out. However, there are plenty of other options available to try out.



**5 Almost there** The second High Structure preset produces a much better result – plenty of texture and tone in the landscape, and those clouds look amazing. Further tweaks can be made using the sliders in the top right.



**6 Darken the sky** A quick way to add more drama to the sky is by using the Burn Edges tool in the right-hand panel – select the top edge, the adjust Strength, Size and Transition to your taste.

**7 Make selective tweaks** Select the brighter area of sky using the Polygonal Lasso Tool in Photoshop, feathering set to 200 to give a soft transition. Adjust Levels to darken the area of sky to balance it with the rest of the image.

**8 Final touches** Make some final tweaks, including lightening the small church using the Dodge Tool so it stands out more against the stormy landscape. The Exposure was set to just 15% to avoid it looking too obvious.

# Master composition

## Follow this in-depth guide to discover the principles of good composition in black-and-white photography

**PERSPECTIVE**
To accentuate perspective, choose your lens and viewpoint carefully. A wide-angle lens and a central viewpoint will emphasise distance within a shot

# Rules of composition: when to use and when to break...

**Composition is a tricky thing to master.** Unlike the technical aspects of picture-taking, composition cannot be measured like exposure, white balance or focus. It's a subjective thing that requires personal taste and an appreciation for a range of aspects such as line, shape, perspective and value – to name a few.

Without a solid set of rules, composing photographs well can feel a little overwhelming. Over the next few pages you will discover some of the aspects that contribute to a well-composed shot. It's up to you to figure out the best combination for your shot, put them into practice and assess how you can use them to emphasise your scene. It's about self-expression and evoking mood and atmosphere, rather than replicating the scene as your camera sees it. The word 'composition' is defined as 'a mixture of ingredients' – here we'll provide the ingredients, but then it's your job to make the cake.

One of the first things you need to establish in your scene is what to keep and what to discard. As a photographer it's your job to actively edit your scene to get the best from it. This could mean waiting for a person to get out of your shot, gardening a few distracting blades of grass away from the flower you want to photograph or simply deciding to only photograph part of the scene rather than all of it. If you learn one thing about composition, the key is to simplify your scene as much as you can. Photographing the bare essentials will provide a far more striking image than a muddle of conflicting elements screaming at the viewer from every direction. A simple crop, moving in closer or removing the unnecessary extras can all work wonders to help you achieve top shots.

Once you've decided what to retain and what to discard, the next job is to consider your viewpoint. You can easily transform a scene by looking at it from above or below. Assess the available vantage points of the scene and consider whether it could look better shot from a different angle or height other than eye level. This approach can transform bland objects into something exciting and original. A spiral staircase can really benefit from being photographed from above, in order to emphasise the height and curve of the structure. Likewise, a monument or large imposing structure can be made to look even more dramatic by shooting from below and looking upwards, exaggerating its height.

This leads us nicely onto the idea of perspective. Our eyes are capable of determining the depth and perspective of scenes before us, such as never-ending tunnels and rolling mountains in the distance. However, the camera needs a helping hand to transform what would be a flat photograph into the depth-filled image that we see before us. If your scene would benefit from a bit of oomph in the depth department, then this can be controlled with a carefully considered choice of lens coupled with a decent viewpoint.

To exaggerate the effect of distance in a tunnel or a long straight road, for example, you need to emphasise the converging verticals – a term referring to appearance of the scene squeezing to a point in the distance. Do this by using a wide-angle lens, which will exaggerate the width at the start of the scene and the narrowness at the back. Position yourself

**PATTERN**
Look for pattern and texture in your subjects. These can produce great abstract images if photographed close-up, or add interest to an otherwise flat image

"Offsetting your subject towards the corners of the frame helps to create a more free-flowing image"

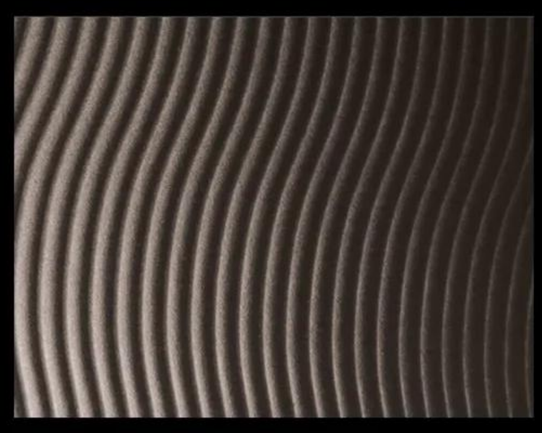
## Important elements A brief guide to some of the most oft-used rules of composition

### SYMMETRY
Be careful when considering symmetry in your images, as it can be too easy for the viewer to flit over it. For a decent symmetrical image to work, there needs to be a sense of tension, which can be created by elements of suspense or surprise.

### DEPTH OF FIELD
When organising space, depth of field can play a big role in how the image will look. Think about what you want to see sharp and then adjust your depth of field accordingly. Macro shots generally look best with the background out of focus.

### MOMENTS IN TIME
If your scene is a source of action, pre-focus in order to capture the moment in time. Anticipation is key, so be prepared and choose your moment carefully. Alternatively, use Continuous Shooting mode to capture a sequence in time.

### TEXTURE
To really appeal to the viewer's senses, incorporate texture into your shot. The appearance of texture can be heightened with the aid of good lighting. A light source raking across the textured surface will exaggerate it beautifully.



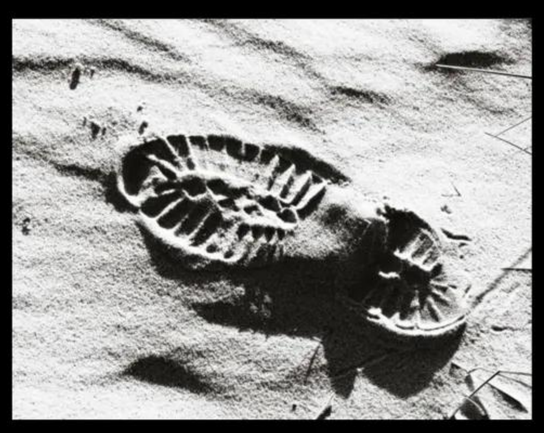
centrally so the converging lines look longer and consider giving the camera a slight upward tilt to maximise the sense of distance between the beginning and end of the scene.

Just as lines are important to perspective, they also play a vital role in other aspects of photography too. The term 'leading lines' is frequently thrown around in photography and refers to structural elements in a photograph that lead the viewer's eye into the picture. The most obvious line used in photography is that of the horizon – a perfectly straight line by which everything else is arranged around. Just think how obvious it is when a scene has a skewed horizon – it's the epitome of distraction and a serious schoolboy error, which separates the amateurs from anyone more serious about their photography. There are plenty of man-made lines to think about too, including buildings, power lines, cranes, vehicles and structures. Think about how lines feature in your scene and where they are leading. Are they a main feature of the scene? Are they leading your viewer into the scene or are they causing a distraction to the main event? Consider your viewpoint and perspective to establish how you can make the lines work well in the scene. For example, certain lines impart different qualities. A diagonal can give the impression of speed, curves can have a calming influence and angular lines often impart a sense of discord.

A great example of this is with fine art photography, which relies on the soft curves of the body to achieve a calming natural flow throughout the image. A racing car's speed can be accelerated by capturing it on a diagonal or a slight tilt, while an abstract image is given energy and dynamism by accentuating its angles

**USE OF LINES**
Lines can help draw the viewer into the shot and direct them to the point of focus. Alternatively, they can also act as a distraction, so be careful how the lines in your scene lay

**TONE**
Tone relates to the full range of greys present in the scale from the blackest black to the purest white. For a tranquil appeal, it's best to aim for low-contrast images. To emphasise extremes, opt for a high-contrast effect.



**FORM**
To take an image that really appreciates form, look out for areas of shading within your subject. The greater degree of shading and number of tones there are, the more pleasing the subject. Position yourself to capture as many shades as possible.

**COLOUR**
Assess your main subject and consider whether it will benefit from colour treatment. A bleak black and white scene can sometimes be made more dramatic by selectively colouring a single element. Pick out key items from your image and emphasise them using this technique.

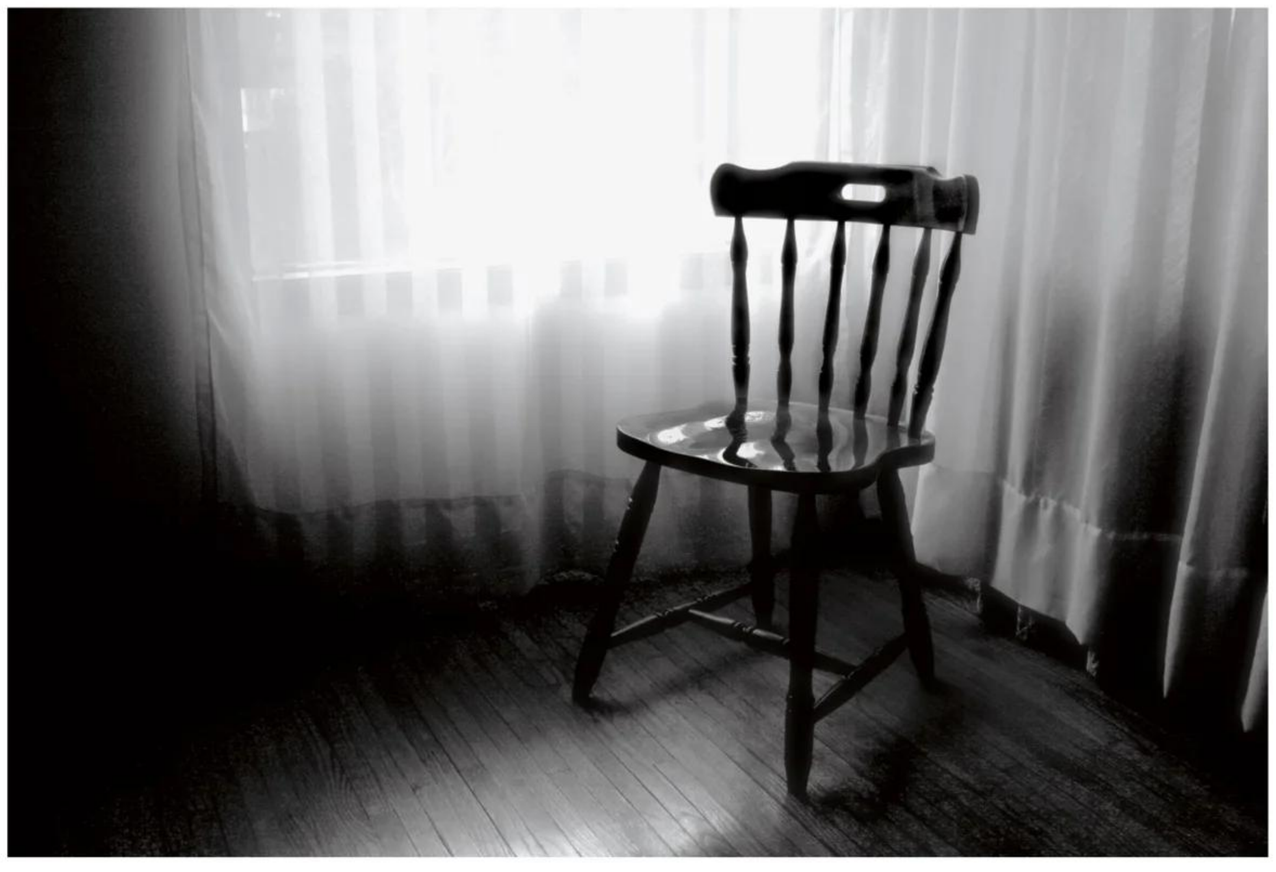
**SPACE**
When photographing moving subjects, always ensure there is room in front of them. This gives the picture a sense that there is room for your subject to move into and emphasises their journey

## RULE OF THIRDS

The rule of thirds is a common practice for many photographers. This compositional technique works by dividing the scene using a grid system of two vertical and two horizontal lines, dissecting the image into thirds.

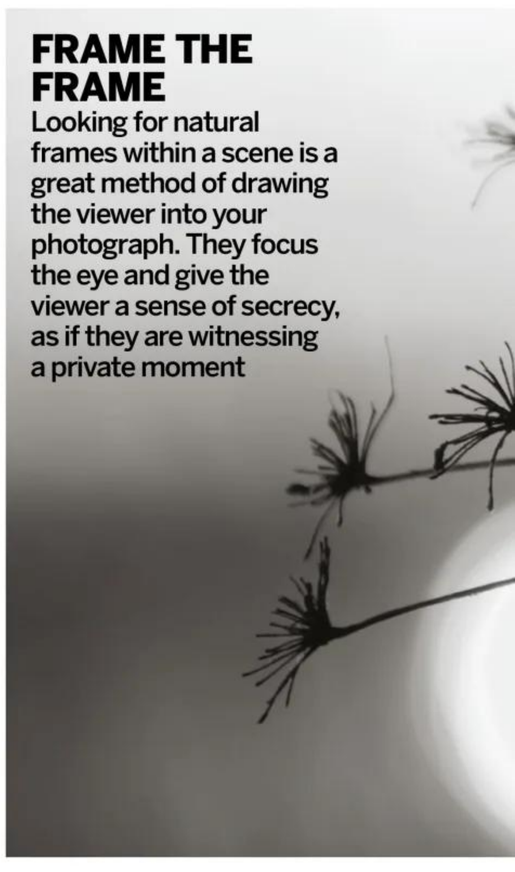
The ideal placement of your subject should be at one of the points where the lines intersect. Decide in which of the four intersections you want to place your main subject and then compose the scene accordingly around it. Obviously not every scene will line up precisely with the grid, but a rough adherence to the rules will provide you with a well-composed image.

Many cameras come with a display option which can be turned on, superimposing a grid on top of the image on your LCD or within your viewfinder for accurate rule of thirds composition. The rule of thirds is generally a good system to go by when in doubt, but be careful not to rely on this theory for shot after shot, as images will become bland and unexciting. Some of the best photographs come about by knowing the rules and consciously breaking them.



## FRAME THE FRAME

Looking for natural frames within a scene is a great method of drawing the viewer into your photograph. They focus the eye and give the viewer a sense of secrecy, as if they are witnessing a private moment



"Just think how obvious it is when a scene has a skewed horizon – it's the epitome of distraction and a serious schoolboy error, which separates the amateurs from anyone more serious"

and edges. Pick a theme you want to emphasise and use the available lines to your advantage.

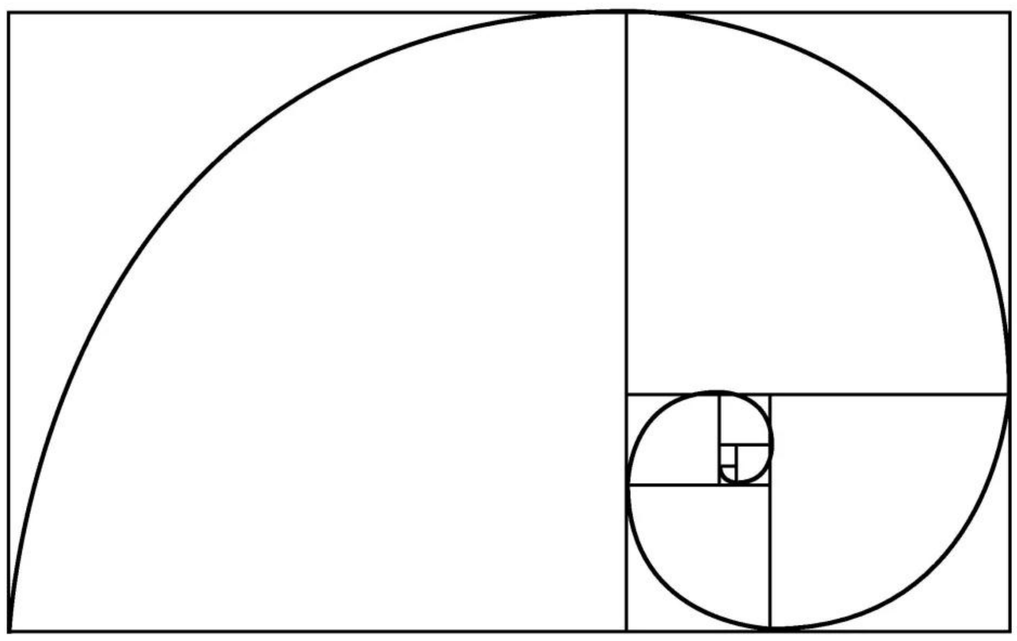
Line usually gives way to shape, which is another important compositional aspect you should be considering in your photographs. Shape can appear from unsuspecting influences such as light and tone. Consider the striking effect of a silhouette cast on a stonewall, or a bundle of bright fuchsia petals forming an interestingly shaped cluster on a pathway. Alternatively, shapes that can be misinterpreted as something else can also make interesting images – clouds, trees and close-up shots of vegetables often offer quirky shapes within them. Whatever your shape, it's important to think about the balance within the image. Where there are a variety of shapes in the scene, the largest or darkest in tone will generally be the dominator. Ask yourself whether this is the effect you want to achieve – if not, then recompose the shot so the dominating shape is no longer in the scene. Some shapes, however, can actually go a long way in helping to define the main subject. Blacked-out areas such as silhouettes offer an ideal opportunity to frame or accentuate a coloured part of the scene and bring it to the forefront of attention.

Successful composition relies heavily on a good sense of framing. A badly framed image will leave your subject looking lost and unimportant. Remember that - thanks to cropping - you are not restricted to the aspect ratio of your camera. It's important to visualise how you see the final picture, and compose your shot in accordance with this vision. The actual cropping process can be done in-camera or in Photoshop later on, but bear in mind you'll sacrifice image quality if you choose to go with the latter option. Another important factor is the placement of the subject within your frame. Amateurs will commonly place their subject centrally in the scene, which rarely makes for an engaging image. Offsetting your subject towards the corners of the frame creates a more free-flowing image and offers suspense. It's important to give living subjects room to move into. For example, if you photograph a local walking down the street from left to right, place the man on the left and leave space on the right for the man to metaphorically walk into. For objects, sizing should be considered. A macro shot of a flower looks so much more dramatic when it's positioned to fill the frame, whereas it can look rather puny in an expanse of space.

A clever compositional technique is to look for a frame within a frame. Shooting a scene through a window gives viewers a chance to step back, separate themselves and get a sense of what it feels like to be the photographer.

These are just a few of the elements that should be considered when composing an image. Your job as a photographer is to determine the importance of each element in the scene and react accordingly, making sure the right parts are emphasised. It's your photo, and you have a certain set of emotions and ideals you want to convey. Composition will help you express these emotions, taking a regular scene and transforming it into something with meaning that's personal to you.

Composition is something that is always done, whether you're a good photographer or a bad one. What distinguishes you from the bad photographer is the ability to know how to compose your shot well. Taken on board, these pointers will help you consider the scene and its outcome before you press the shutter.



## GOLDEN SECTION

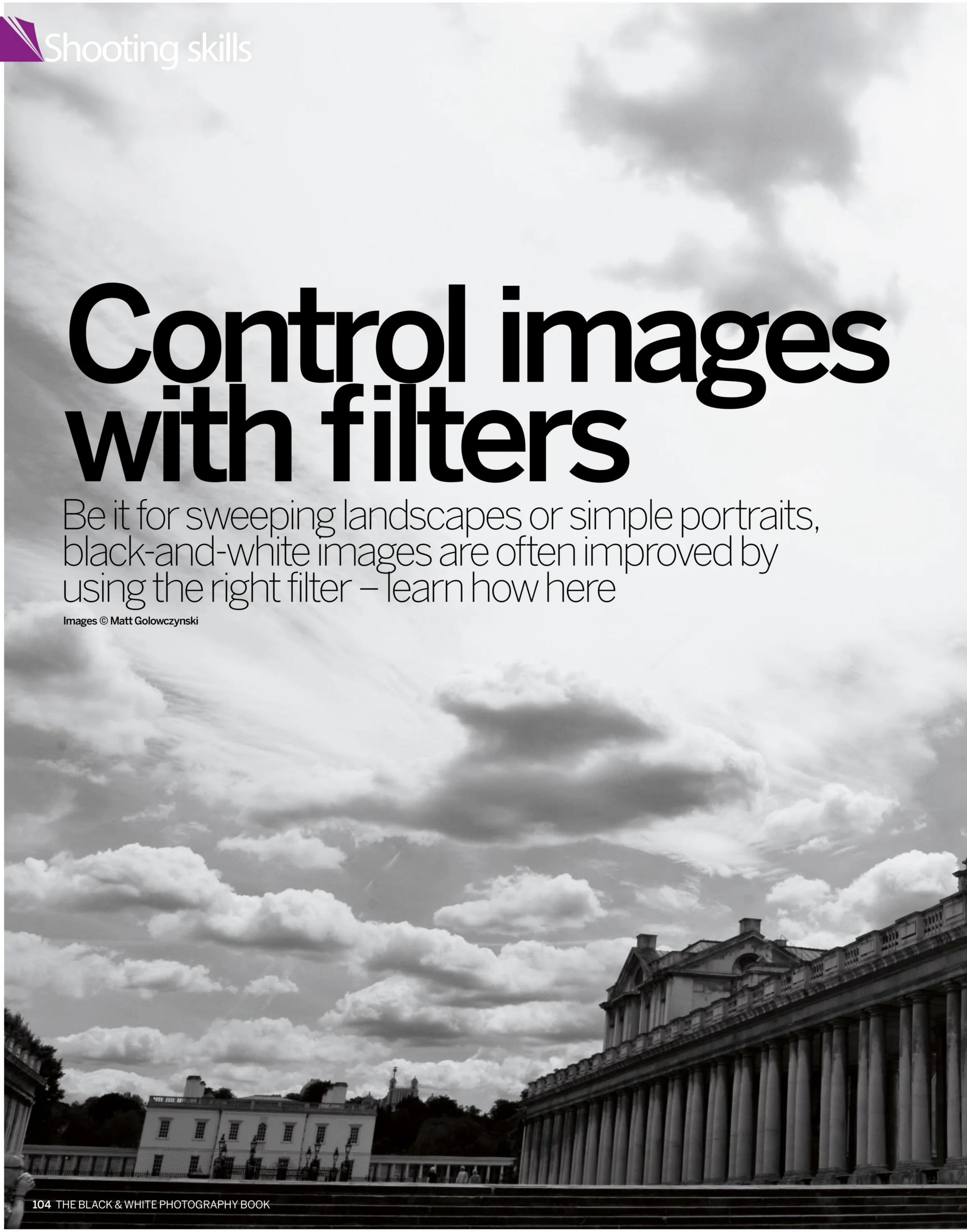
**The golden section is a compositional rule, which hails from a twelfth-century Italian mathematician known as Fibonacci. This historical figure is famed for his discovery of a number sequence, which starts with 0 and 1. The series forms by adding the previous two numbers together, hence the formation: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, etc. When you divide each successive pair, you come up with a result of 1.6. Known as the 'golden number' as highlighted by the Greek letter Phi, this is the essential key to mathematics and proportions, and this is where composition comes into the picture.**

**A rectangle can be divided into golden number proportions, which is meant to demonstrate harmony in an image. This ratio can be used to decide where to place the main subject, where to place the horizon and generally how to divide the frame. As always, this is not a fix-all solution and should be used with care.**

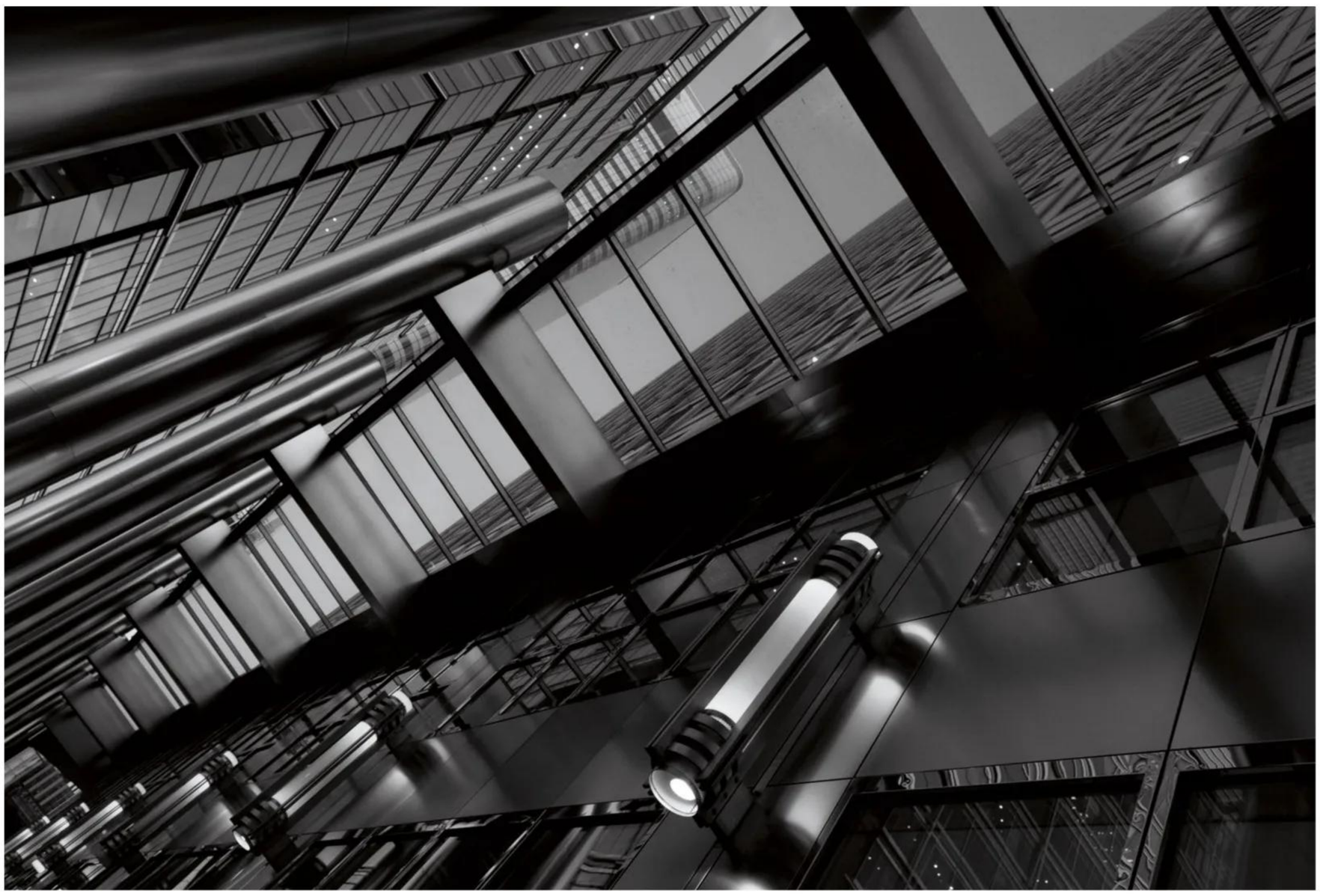
# Control images with filters

Be it for sweeping landscapes or simple portraits, black-and-white images are often improved by using the right filter – learn how here

Images © Matt Golowczynski



# Control images with filters



# Master the use of filters in digital photography

**ARCHITECTURE**
Complex architecture with strong geometric shapes like this building works best if there's plenty of contrast in your shot. As with the other image on this page, an orange filter helps to provide this contrast boost and really bring out the shapes and smooth textures of the structure, for added impact
**Shot details:** Canon EOS 350D with 18-55mm lens at 18mm and f11, 1/100sec, ISO 200

**ORANGE FILTER**
Architecture is another subject which can lend itself well to black-and-white filter photography. Here, an orange filter has helped separate the shadow and highlight details in the structure, boosting overall contrast
**Shot details:** Nikon D700 with 24-70mm lens at 24mm and f11, 1/8sec, ISO 800

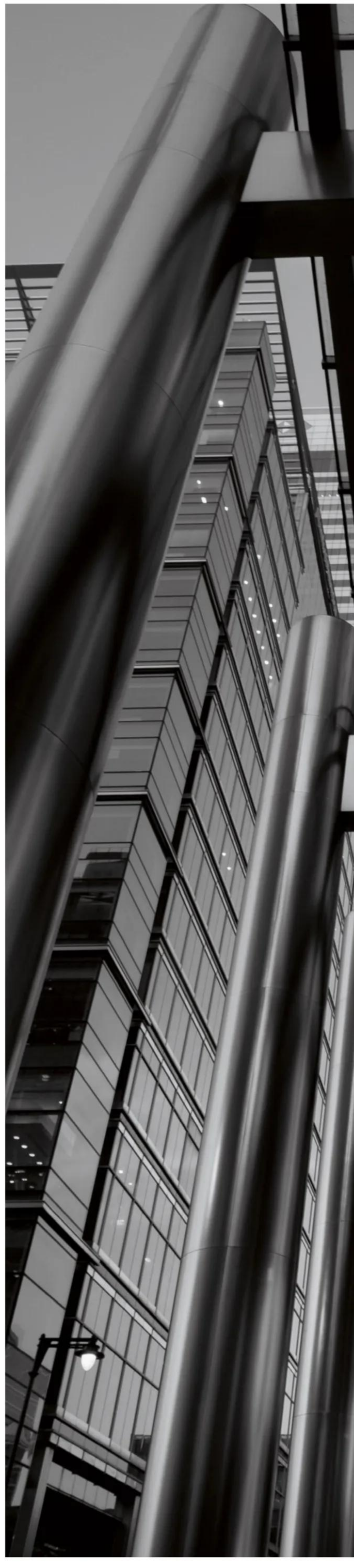
**As with a number of other traditional photographic practices, filters have fallen a little out of fashion since the advent of digital capture and manipulation.** What was once a useful way to control tonality, and a way for a photographer to accentuate key elements within a scene, has today been sadly lost among a number of post-capture processing options.

So what argument remains for the use of filters prior to capture? Getting it right in-camera offers more than just the immediate satisfaction of seeing your envisaged results instantly – something Photoshop will never be able to replicate. Using filters to achieve a particular aim hones the photographic eye, and enables the photographer to recognise scenes with potential for striking black and white images. Whether you intervene to bring out a few clouds in a landscape, or boost contrast in the strong geometry of an architectural image, the application of filters is a useful one to understand.

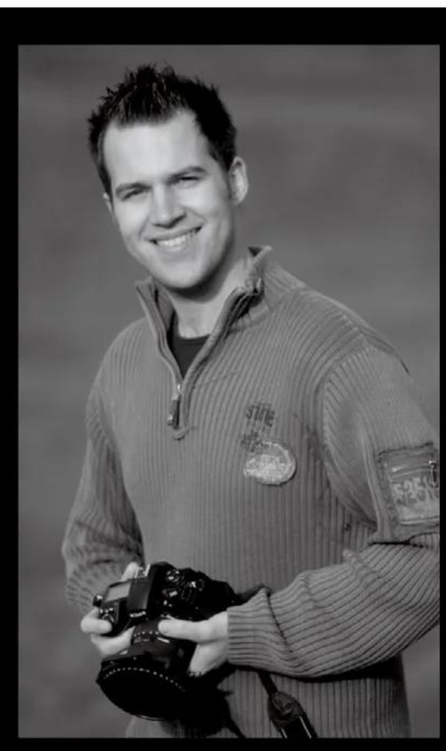
Both coloured and non-coloured filters can be used for black and white photography. Coloured filters work by filtering out certain wavelengths of light and letting others through. These wavelengths correspond to the different colours we see, all of which can be created by mixing different proportions of red, blue and green light. The role of any filter is to change something about the light coming into the lens – and by using a coloured one we can decide which wavelengths ultimately reach the sensor.

The most common types for black and white are red, green, orange and yellow, each of which transmit their own colour and absorb others. What results is the same colour recording lighter next to the absorbed colours, which record darker. Yellow filters are typically the first port of call for landscapes and portraits, as their effects retain a neutrality which is lost with other filters. As well as lightening yellows, they also lighten some reds and greens while darkening blues a little – which makes them useful for bringing out clouds from skies. Orange filters serve a similar purpose, darkening blues and greens while lightening reds, greens and yellows, the result being that blue skies are darkened even further to provide a much more noticeable contrast.

With red and green being two of the three primary colours, their effects are easier to understand: red filters absorb blue and green while green filters absorb blue and red. A red filter used in the same scenario will have the greatest effect,



# Filter tips and tricks



Award-winning photographer and author Ross Hoddinott is as good an authority on outdoor photography as there is. The author of six photography books, including *The Digital Photographer's Guide To Filters* (2007), Ross has previously been awarded the accolade of 'British Wildlife Photographer of the Year', and together with photographer Mark Bauer, runs a series of workshops where he shares his expertise of South West England with other photographers. For more information on Ross visit **www.rosshoddinott.co.uk**, and for further details of his workshops visit **www.dawn2duskphotography.co.uk**.

**What camera equipment do you use?**

**RH: I'm a Nikon user, using both D700 and D300 bodies, along with a host of Nikkor, Zeiss and some Sigma optics.**

**Which filter do you find the most useful for black and white work?**

**RH: In my view, the most useful filters for atmospheric black and white landscape photography are neutral density filters, particularly extreme density versions like the Lee 'Big Stopper'. 10-stop ND filters are currently very popular and used appropriately they create striking, surreal looking results. They are particularly effective in overcast light and their effect suits conversion to mono – I would say they are definitely a must-have for black and white landscape photographers these days.**

**Do you have any preferred type of filter system?**

**RH: For quality and versatility, the Lee Filters system is, in my opinion, unrivalled. Its 100mm size is just large enough to be used in combination with super-wide angles without vignetting occurring, and being customisable, you can have one, two or three filter slots and also add an adapter ring to take a polarising filter.**

**What tips would you have for anyone who is starting out using filters?**

**RH: Avoid the temptation to overuse filters. Filters are essential accessories, but their effect can be very seductive through the viewfinder. Although filters are primarily designed to correct and enhance an image, used incorrectly they can also ruin a great shot just as easily!**

**ORANGE FILTER**
The medium contrast of an orange filter is ideal for enhancing landscape images such as this one, bringing greater contrast to the building as well as the sky
**Shot details:** Nikon D700 with 24-70mm lens at 24mm and f11, 1/125, ISO 200

## What to look for

Once you've decided to invest in a filter or two, the next issue is which type to go for. Filters may be circular and threaded onto a lens, or square and mounted in a holder. The advantage of the former is that it's all you need – simply screw it in and you can start shooting. Some also allow you to continue using a lens hood when in place. The disadvantage is that it will only fit one particular filter thread, meaning it may well only fit one of your lenses. Stepping rings offer a solution, with one side screwed into a lens and the other into a larger diameter filter. Square filters differ in that their use isn't dictated by a particular filter thread, although they require an adaptor and holder for them to be mounted. Even so, they allow for the same filter to be used across different lenses simply by changing the adaptor – which is often cheaper than the price of an additional filter. Filters also differ in how they are made, with resin, glass or polyester filters being the most commonly used materials. Glass and resin filters are recommended for optimum quality – and this will typically be reflected in their price – but the former is more susceptible to damage if mishandled.

**"The filter you should use will be the same colour as the details in your scene you wish to emphasise"**

rendering blue skies and foliage as black to introduce a sense of drama. Green filters, meanwhile, are perhaps used less, but are called upon when shooting foliage. Blue filters do also exist, though they aren't used very often within the world of black and white photography.

It's not just coloured filters that find their place in black and white photography, though. Polarisers can still be used to eliminate reflections and boost contrast, just as neutral density grad filters can be called upon to help balance brighter areas against darker ones. Furthermore, standard neutral density filters are especially useful for cutting down the exposure by a few stops – particularly when a slower shutter speed is desired.

Knowing which to use in a given situation takes some practise, but understanding which colours a filter absorbs and transmits is key. Broadly speaking, the filter you should use will be the same colour as the details in your scene you wish to emphasise, although it's useful to consider how such a filter will affect the other colours in your scene. Other filters such as polarisers and neutral density types should be used with the same considerations, and in the same way, as for colour photography.

As all modern DSLRs use TTL metering to calculate exposure, you'll find that fronting their lenses with a filter automatically adjusts the reading. As such, it will only be necessary to decide whether these exposure settings are still suitable for the situation, though occasionally you may need to apply exposure compensation depending on the scene and filter you have chosen. One way to work out whether any adjustment is necessary is to use live view in conjunction with a histogram, if you camera has both of these options. That way you can check whether the exposure at which your image will retain a good tonal balance, and you will also be able to witness the effects your filter has on the scene. It's also a very quick way to see whether any vignetting has occurred through filter use, which is particularly noticeable with circular threaded filters used at wide apertures.

Of course, there's no requirement for you to use a filter for each black and white image that you take. Indeed, many won't require one at all, and some images may suffer from an incorrectly used filter. It may also be tempting to reach for the strongest filter you have for the greatest effect, but these will not always be suitable. You will need to bear in mind that filters tend to work best in fine conditions, such as when there is already a good contrast in the scene. In a landscape, for example, this could be when there are already defined clouds against a deep blue sky.

**YELLOW FILTER**
The subtle contrast of a yellow filter has helped separate the main focus in this image from the surrounding buildings
**Shot details:** Nikon D700 with 24-70mm lens at 24mm and f10, 1/160sec, ISO 400

**POLARISER**
A polariser was used in this image, which has helped increase the contrast between the blue sky and the white clouds
**Shot details:** Canon EOS 350D with 18-55mm lens at 18mm and f11, 1/100sec, ISO 200

# Control images with filters

## Compare and contrast The differing effects of colour filters

As different as the colours are in this image, the black and white conversion shows how similarly the two colours have recorded in tones. Different colour filters show the ways in which this can be altered, either by a red filter to make the flower brighter than the background, or a green filter to make it appear darker.

**ORIGINAL COLOUR**
**Shot details:** Nikon D700 with 24-70mm lens at 70mm and f8, 1/40sec, ISO 400

**BLACK AND WHITE**
**Shot details**: Nikon D700 with 24-70mm lens at 70mm and f8, 1/40sec, ISO 400

**GREEN FILTER**
**Shot details:** Nikon D700 with 24-70mm lens at 70mm and f4, 1/25sec, ISO 400

**RED FILTER**
**Shot details:** Nikon D700 with 24-70mm lens at 70mm and f4, 1/15sec, ISO 400

# Shining a light on high key

## Take a closer look at how you can master this diverse and powerful style of photography

**Photography is all about capturing the world around us in a still image**, but where we point the lens – and the lighting conditions that we choose to shoot in – enables us to be both selective and creative in terms of how we choose to present the world that we see.

Taken as an average, most scenes consist of a range of different tones, from fairly deep shadows through to relatively bright highlights – with the many midtones generally dominant.

However, some scenes have something a little different about them. If you look down a side street or alleyway in a city at night, illuminated by perhaps just a single streetlight, much of the scene will be in shadow. A faithfully exposed image of the scene will be a classically low-key shot. This means that the areas of shadow in the image will be more visually dominant and a low percentage of the photo will consist of brighter midtones or highlights.

Conversely, a scene in which white or pale tones dominate, such as a swan against a pale-blue sky, is high key. Once again, this can be thought of as an image in which a high proportion of the scene is formed of brighter midtones and highlights, with darker midtones and shadows pushed aside.

### 5 reasons to shoot high key:

**01** Very bright or light-toned images are instinctively attractive to the human eye.

**02** High key is very flattering for particular subjects and scenes.

**03** The format converts into a black-and-white style beautifully.

**04** High-key images can be made to look modern and dynamic or simple and classic.

**05** High-key studio portraits let you work flexibly with your subjects, enabling them to change poses without needing to change the lighting.

Although, on the face of it, high-key photography seems like a fairly clear-cut and definite concept, some of the subtleties and nuances of what constitutes a high-key image are flexible. Different photographers have slightly varying ideas of what, to them, is a high-key image.

This is the case when it comes to the creation of high-key images in a studio environment. For the sake of creative flexibility, photographers don't always strictly adhere to all of the characteristics often ascribed to high-key photography. Some features of high-key imaging may be used, while others are adapted or even completely overlooked.

Some photographers consider that a true high-key image should have limited areas of shadow – and lack deep shadows – resulting in low-contrast, soft images. However, in recent years a lot of studio-based portrait and product photographers have eschewed this approach to high key, opting for bright but high-contrast images.

Similarly, light and relatively pale tones are often associated with high key and many images are presented in monochrome. However, this is not always followed in modern high-key portrait and product photography, with strong, bold colours being used in place of soft, pastel ones.

In these situations, the term 'high key' is used slightly differently, referring to high-impact images in which the background is a clean, pure white and the subject has been purposefully brightly lit. Appropriately enough, the key light is also often turned up to a high power setting in these cases.

Deliberate overexposure of the scene is an element of most high-key photography, but it's really only a supplementary step in creating a high-key image. What this means is that it's not generally possible to force a high-key image simply by using excessive exposure compensation or opening up the aperture to the widest possible setting. The most important high-key ingredients – whether it's ultra-bright lighting in the studio or a light and bright colour palette in the field – have to be in place.

Arguably the form of photography most closely associated with high key today is bright studio portraiture. Most modern photography studios have offered this style of lighting, often as their signature look, during recent years.

It's not hard to see why. Low-key lighting, especially when presented in monochrome, lends itself well to serious and moody portraits, but isn't, perhaps, quite so appropriate when taking portraits of families and young children – which is what many commercial portrait photography studios tend to specialise in.

As the areas of bright illumination are relatively small within a low-key image – and the lighting needs to be carefully positioned in order to achieve this look – the subject needs to be fairly static, which is of course not always easy to achieve when photographing active children.

However, with high-key lighting, creating an abundance of bright light means that precise subject positioning is less important, enabling children the freedom to move around the studio space while the photographer is still able to capture images. High-key lighting is also great for capturing group shots, again due to the amount of light that's created in this setup.

As many as four or five separate flash units are often used to create high-key portraits in the studio, although great results can be achieved using only three lights. One of the most important elements of the high-key lighting setup is the illumination of a pure white backdrop.

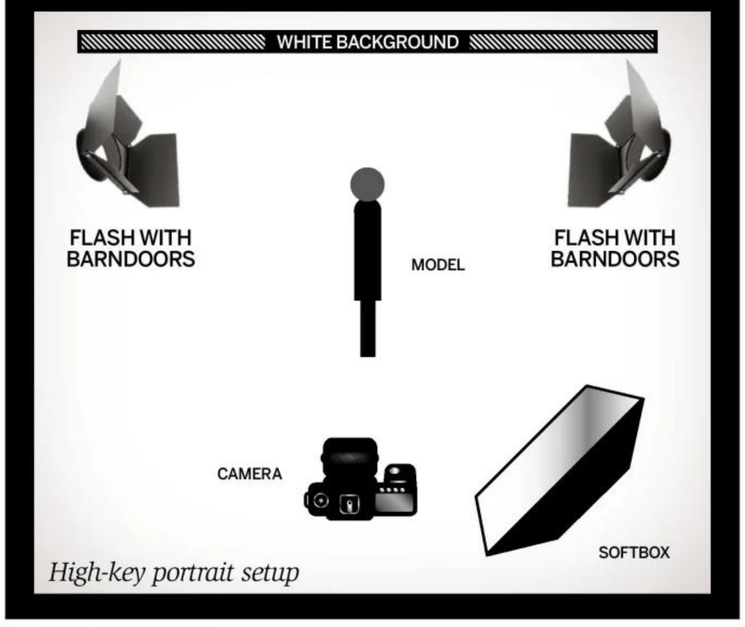
"The subtleties and nuances of what constitutes a high-key image are flexible"

**HIGH KEY**
This image, with the background correctly lit to produce a pure white and the right kind of processing applied post-capture, is a high-key portrait

**MID KEY**
If the background isn't correctly lit, even if it appears white to the naked eye, it will appear a muddy grey or murky pink in the image, resulting in an effect closer to mid key

## A high-key studio portrait setup

**Three lights are all that's required to produce a strong high-key studio portrait**




*High-key portrait setup*

# High key histogram

This histogram, from a high-key studio portrait, demonstrates that there is still a good spread of tones present in many high-key images and the detail isn't all crowded at the far right.

**SIMPLE COMPOSITION**
Including just the small group of trees, slightly off-centre and small within the frame, is an ideal compositional approach for a high-key landscape shot

**NEGATIVE SPACE**
Negative space in a high-key image is restful and an effective tool to use. Except for the trees, there are no other focal points in the scene.

**MONOCHROMATIC**
The range of tones is very limited in this scene, providing an almost monochrome effect

© Mark Bauer

© Andrew Lockie

Even if the backdrop looks completely white to the naked eye, if it's not separately lit then it could appear grey or even a purplish shade of pink in your images. While the lighting used for the subject – which might include a key light, a fill light and possibly even a rim or hair light – is usually dialled up to quite a powerful setting in high-key lighting, these lights will not ensure a white background, even if a degree of overexposure is included.

In a small studio space, with white walls acting as reflectors, it's often not necessary to use anything other than a powerful key light for the subject and many photographers favour using fewer lights, so that more contrast is created.

High key is by no means restricted to a studio environment and several high-powered flash units. In fact, high-key images can be created with nothing more than your camera and lens, because some scenes are inherently high key and the right composition and exposure is all that's required.

Very simple minimalist scenes, with relatively few elements and a limited colour range, are often ideally suited to high-key shots and there are even certain weather conditions that work extremely well for capturing high-key images outdoors.

Snow is perhaps the best example of this, covering the world in a blanket of white that's perfect for producing high-key images. Fog and mist are also great for high key, especially when combined with slight overexposure and conversion to monochrome.

High-key portraits can also be captured on-location, with or without portable lighting and accessories. For example, a model can be photographed against a cloudy sky or plain wall and, with the right use of overexposure, a high-key effect can be produced.

Of course, access to off-camera flash units – including speedlights and reflectors – offers an advantage. Outside, a single speedlight in a portable softbox can be used as a backdrop, while a second speedlight or reflector can be employed to ensure correct exposure on the model. Indoors, backlighting can again be employed via sunlight coming in through a window with net curtains or blinds.

Obviously, as is very often the case, you'll have more to work with if you capture your images in RAW. This will increase your chances of rescuing any lost detail, especially on the subject's clothing. In fact, Photoshop enables you to light and expose your high-key images with a degree of caution, so you can ensure that all skin and clothing detail is retained while fine-tuning the brightness and exposure of the image in post-capture.

In addition to the options provided within the RAW processing interface, Photoshop and Elements both offer a range of tools to improve and enhance high-key images. Using Screen blending mode on a duplicate layer doubles the brightness of the image and this can be combined with blending options for fine control. Adding a Gaussian Blur filter can also be quite effective with high key and a similar effect can be achieved using Diffuse Glow in the Distort section of the Filter Gallery.

Curves and Levels adjustments can both be used to lighten an image as well as improve contrast and a similar effect can also be achieved by duplicating Overlay and Soft Light blending modes.

## Set up for high key

Getting a studio ready to shoot high-key images is quick and easy

**1 Background lights** Getting the lights set up correctly to expose the background as a pure white is the first step to take in setting up for high-key portraits. Take a few test shots to see how it's working.

**2 Softbox** The key light is normally fitted with a softbox in high-key photography to produce a soft and diffuse spread of light. Bigger softboxes will result in a broader, softer light.

**3 Power settings** Make sure that the power settings on the flash units are correctly set. The two background lights should match each other and the key light should be dialled to a setting that won't overexpose the subject.

**4 Use Manual** Set the camera to Manual mode (M) and unless your flash units are low-powered, avoid a very wide aperture as this could result in overexposure. Use a shutter speed of 1/160sec or 1/200sec.

# Ten ways to use high key

## There's a wide variety of factors that you can alter to produce a range of different high-key results

### Be minimalist

Sparse compositions can be very effective when shooting high-key images. Try including some negative space, along with well-placed points of interest positioned off-centre or in accordance with the rule of thirds.

### Take advantage of mono

Monochrome has an understated simplicity about it that suits high-key photography. From a more practical perspective, black and white can make it possible to push a high-key image to a greater extreme, as there is no need to worry about colour accuracy.

### Reduce the colour palette

If a completely monochrome treatment doesn't seem appropriate, then try lowering the saturation of the image slightly or, better still, shoot the image with a limited colour palette in the first place.

### Try strong colours

If you want a break from mono, really bright, vibrant colours can look incredibly striking in a modern high-key portrait or product image. Such colours would look garish and out of place normally, but when combined with high-key lighting they can look bold and dramatic.

© Lesley Furneaux

### Try a lower contrast

High key is ideal for soft, gentle images with a fairly low contrast. This is perfect for creating the impression of fragility or beauty. Avoid including anything in the shot that should naturally be very dark or black.

### Be cautious with skin

Although some loss of accurate skin tone in a high-key image is fine, particularly when the images are presented in black-and-white, it's wise to keep as much detail as possible at the shooting stage.

### Opt for a high contrast

Although high-key photography is often associated with little or limited shadow, high-contrast high-key images have now become very popular. They can look powerful and modern, both in black-and-white or vibrant colour.

### Improvise

Shooting high-key images isn't all about lots of flash and a fully kitted-out, perfectly white studio. High-key images can be captured in a range of different settings, often with very little equipment.

### Try overexposure

Although by itself overexposure isn't a means of creating a high-key image, deliberately overexposing a high-key photo can be very effective. This is often best left to the processing stage as it will give you much greater control over the results.

### Shoot RAW

Shooting in your camera's RAW format enables you the most possible flexibility when it comes to how you process and edit your files. This is particularly useful when it comes to perfecting the white balance, retrieving lost detail and adjusting contrast.

© Tim Haselberger

© Rick Rae

# Create a high-contrast monochrome portrait

## Discover how a simple lighting technique can yield timeless results in your portraiture

David Bailey's name is as iconic as the images that he created. His contrasting black and white portraiture in particular holds a timeless quality that is often emulated – and as soon as you hear his name, you know his style, you know his models, and it's really as simple as that.

Here you'll discover how you can emulate a look that's closely associated with Bailey in your own shots. As with so many studio lighting techniques, you can use anything from one large softbox, two or even three lights, all with an aim to achieve the same result: a contrasting shadow on a model with a white background.

With a single softbox, your position of the main light will be instrumental in achieving a clear flow of light to both the background and the model. With two lights, you can get more control, as one light will be lighting the background and one will be lighting the model. With a three-light setup, you can have two lights on the back wall for a clear white background and one to shape the model.

This tutorial will look at the simplicity of a two-light approach, creating a high-key background while also lighting your model, replicating the lighting used to create the dramatic and stylish feel of Sixties fashion.

### What you'll need

- Camera
- Two lights
- A softbox
- A bowl reflector
- Tripod
- Model

*Left*
**Using shadow and shape**
Using the straightforward approach of a two-light setup to light both the background and the model – along with a simple prop – you can create a striking and iconic image effortlessly

# Shooting steps

**1 Remove your diffuser** By removing the diffuser from your rear light, you are removing any obstacle in allowing your light to operate at its brightest. As a diffuser, well, diffuses the light, it also allows it to feather outward in a softer manner. By removing it, your light becomes even more directional.

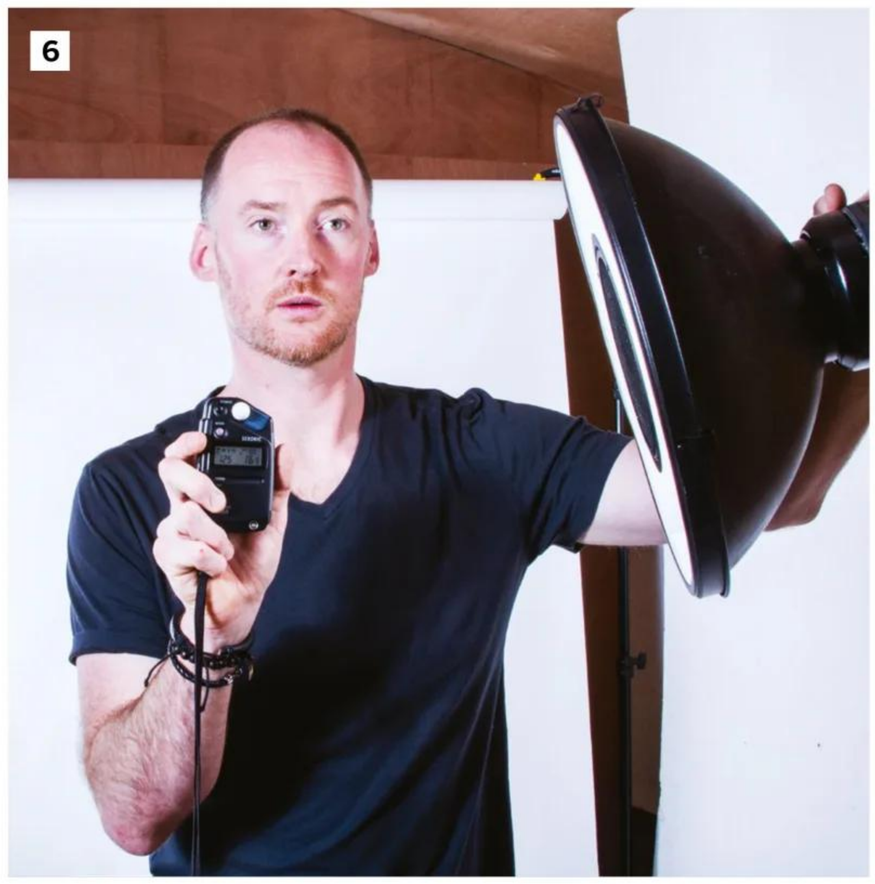
**2 Position your rear light** You will need to position your rear light so that it will flood the back wall without flaring backwards and spilling over the shoulders of your model. As softboxes give a large spill of light anyway, they are a quick and simple choice when you light a large area.

**3 Meter the back wall with one light** Use your light meter to measure the power of your light on the back wall; this reading should be higher than the reading on your subject. We have aimed for f22, as this will completely bleach out if we meter our model at f16, and will increase the contrast and hard separation from the background.

**4 Set up your main light** In using a beauty dish to light our model's face, we need to make sure that any shadows cast on their face are both deliberate and appropriate. The diffuser attachment allows for a soft edge, whereas the centre grid helps keep the light directional to improve shadow detail.

**5 Position your light** As with the rear light, the direction of the main light and reducing any potential spill is of the utmost importance. As the shadow needs to be present and correct, making sure you have your light positioned at the right angle is paramount to achieving a flattering yet punchy image.

**6 Meter again** With your main light set up as well as your rear light, meter the light where your model will be positioned. Do this without the rear light on, and again with it on. This is handy to give yourself a reading of how the two lights will interact with each other.



# The setup

## Style the shot

### Get more out of your shoot with a few simple additions

When you hear the word 'prop' in a photo shoot, visions of inflatable guitars and oversized glasses may spring to mind – but something as simple as a large hat can help create a striking portrait. Here the hat has been used to cover the model's eyes and really focus your attention on her expression, which is the key area of the image.

Remember that any prop will just serve as a distraction, if used incorrectly. It's always important to ensure that a prop matches the overall look and style of the portrait that you are creating, and that it has a strong sense of purpose within the image.

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF LIGHT**
Having both a softbox and a more directional beauty dish will allow a greater spread of light, as well as more control over the flow of light that hits your model.

**METER**
As you will be using more than one light and the separation between model and background is fundamental, make sure you are using a light meter to nail your exposure values.

**GET COMFORTABLE**
Using a stool is a simple and easily overlooked piece of kit. If your model would be standing for a long time and you are only capturing head shots, why not let them sit on a posing stool?

# Editing steps

**1 Reduce the saturation** Start in Adobe Camera Raw. By first reducing the Saturation and Vibrancy of your shot, you will see instantly how any following adjustments will affect the final image, including altering the colour temperature.

**2 Play with the warmth** Even though the image is now monochrome, you can still affect the texture and density of the tone – and by altering the warmth of the image, you can soften the model's skin tones without needing to use a filter.

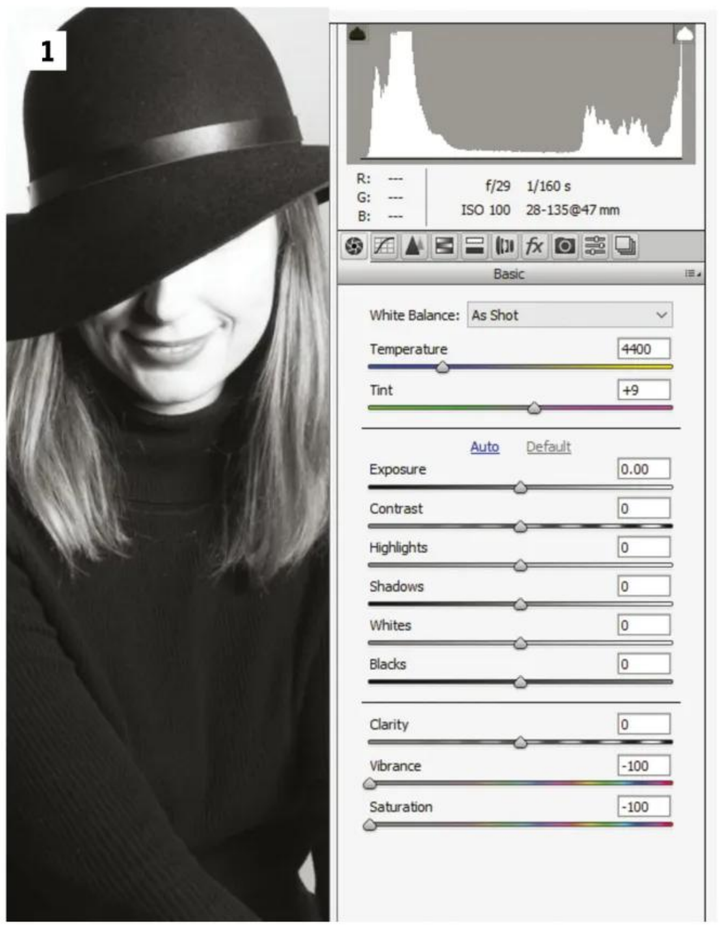
**3 Increase the blacks** By enhancing the black tones of the image, you will be increasing the density of the darker end of the shadows, as well as completely darkening the outfit.

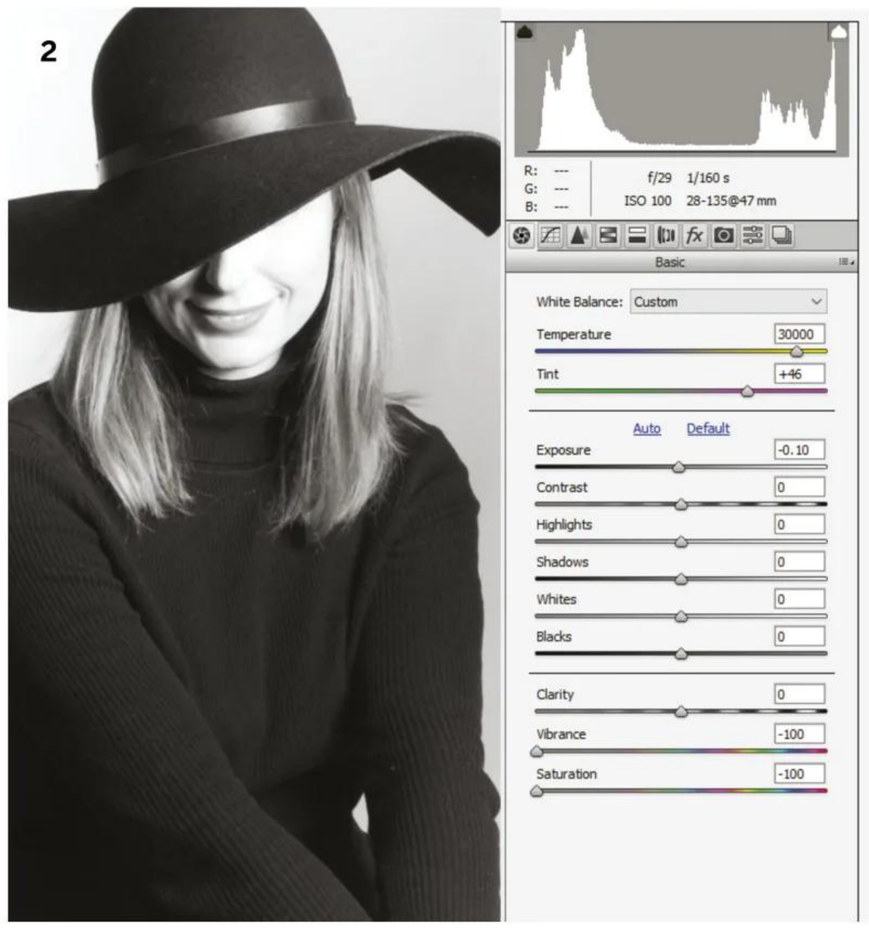
**4 Enhance the contrast** Use the Contrast tab along with the Highlights and Whites sliders to adjust the tonality even further. Note that this will affect the white background slightly.

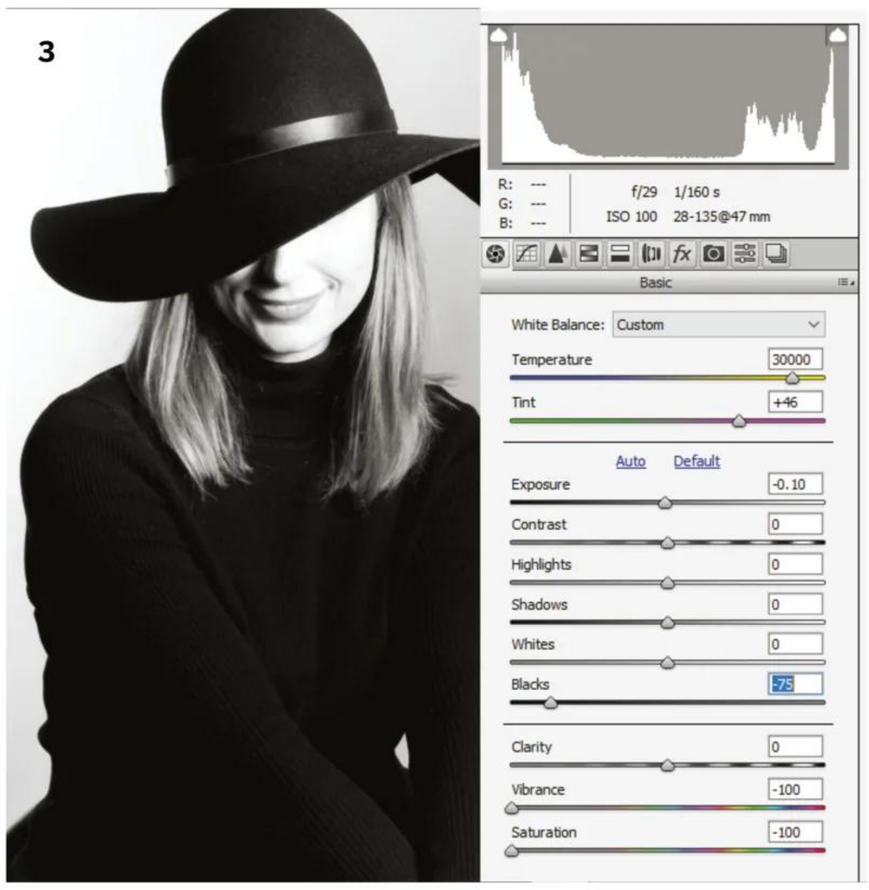
**5 Open to Photoshop** Open the image in Photoshop. Create a Levels adjustment layer and bring the darkness down just enough to enable you to see the marks on the background.

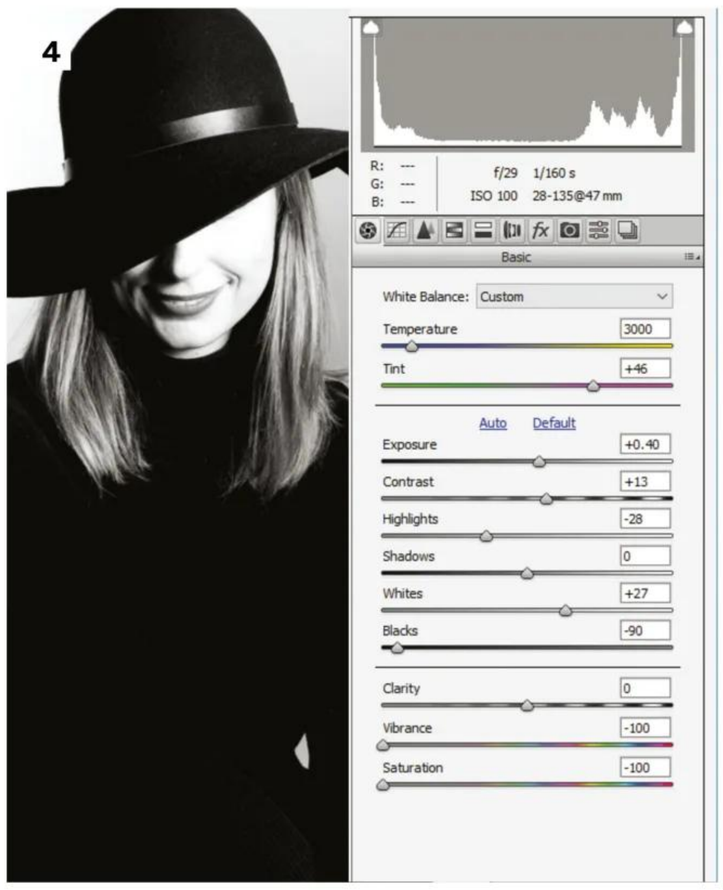
**6 Dodge and Burn** Now select your background layer and pick the Dodge tool; set it to Highlights and raise its strength to 15%, then simply paint out any grey tones from the background. When you've finished, you can delete the adjustment layer.

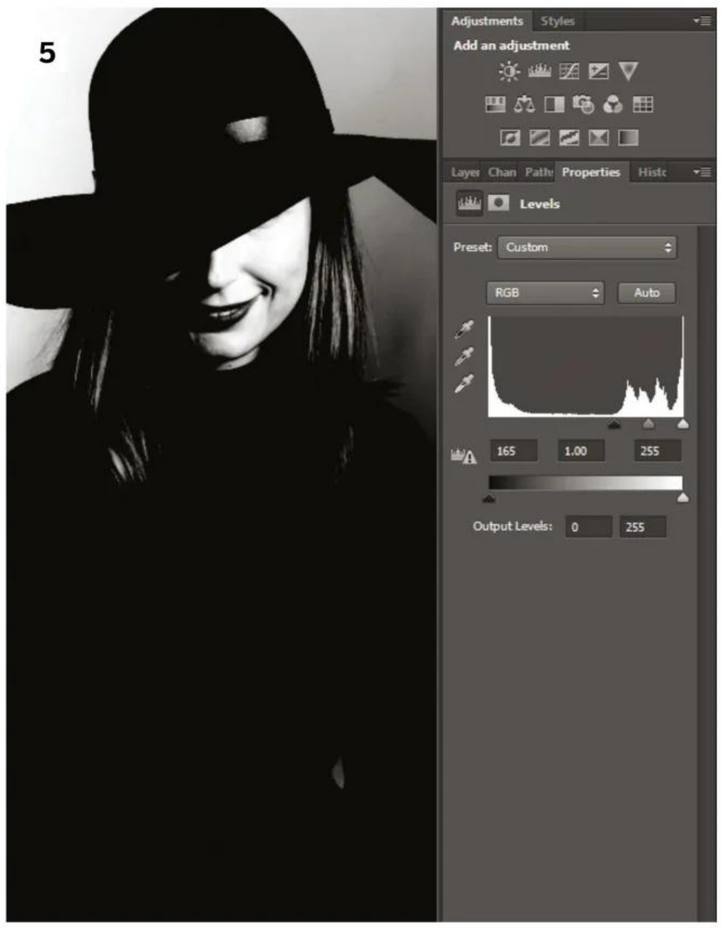
*Right*
**Light simple, edit simple**
Using Adobe Camera Raw to achieve a quick and simple pre-edit before opening your image in Photoshop will give you the edge in fast yet effective editing



# High-contrast monochrome portrait

# Create a film noir portrait

## Shoot and edit atmospheric black-and-white portraits

Portraits are frequently presented in black and white, simply because monochrome is incredibly flattering and has a wonderfully classic look and feel. However, its ubiquity means that it's always worth looking for ways to create black-and-white portraits that have something that's just a little bit different about them.

One way of doing this is to experiment with gritty, film noir-style images, in which creating a moody atmosphere is the name of the game. From a shooting perspective, it's a great technique to try with less experienced models; there's no looking at the camera nor serious posing involved. Instead, the goal is to create a sense of tension through hard, high-contrast lighting, close attention to clothing and location, and dramatic editing techniques.

Although important to virtually all black-and-white photography, with a film noir portrait the relationship between light and shadow is absolutely key to the success of the final image. The secret is to create the sense that your subject exists within the dark environs of a world of shadow, a world illuminated by dramatic shafts of light that are often, according to the conventions of the genre in film, enveloped with smoke. A sense of mystery has to be created through what can't be seen rather than what can be.

**CLASSIC FILM NOIR**
**The location, attire, lighting and time in Photoshop come together to produce an image resembling a still from a film noir classic**

### What you'll need

- DSLR
- Standard lens
- Flash
- Wireless trigger system
- Flash stand
- Model

# Shooting steps

## 01 PICK THE LOCATION

The environment that you choose for your shoot is very important. The classic Forties and Fifties film noir movies often made use of poorly lit alleyways filled with fog or smoke. If you're shooting outside, look for a location that matches the genre, such as an urban location.

## 02 CHOOSE MANUAL

For this technique, you're going to need to have control over the ambient exposure and the flash exposure. This is best achieved by shooting using your camera's Manual mode, so that you have full control. Set ISO 100 for quality and capture RAW files for editing flexibility.

## 03 SET THE EXPOSURE

The desired end result is to make the image appear as though it was captured at night. Part of the key to this is to underexpose the ambient light. Set the shutter speed to the fastest sync speed, around 1/200sec usually, and dial in an aperture that results in a suitable degree of underexposure.

## 04 TRIGGER THE FLASH

You'll need an off-camera flash to light your model, which is much easier to do when the flash is triggered wirelessly. Pocket Wizards are a popular option, but you can also use your camera's proprietary facility, such as the Nikon Creative Lighting System (CLS).

## 05 FLASH SETTINGS

While this can be achieved with a lower-powered flash, you'll have more exposure flexibility if you use a high-end flash unit, such as the Nikon SB-910 or Canon 600EX-RT. Using a narrow aperture to underexpose the ambient light loses you flash power, so the more powerful the flash, the better.

## 06 OFF-CAMERA FLASH

Set the flash on a stand and position it so that it's angled down onto the subject to create a dramatic light source that befits film noir. Don't use flash modifiers designed to soften the lights, as a fairly hard light works better for the effect that you're trying to produce.

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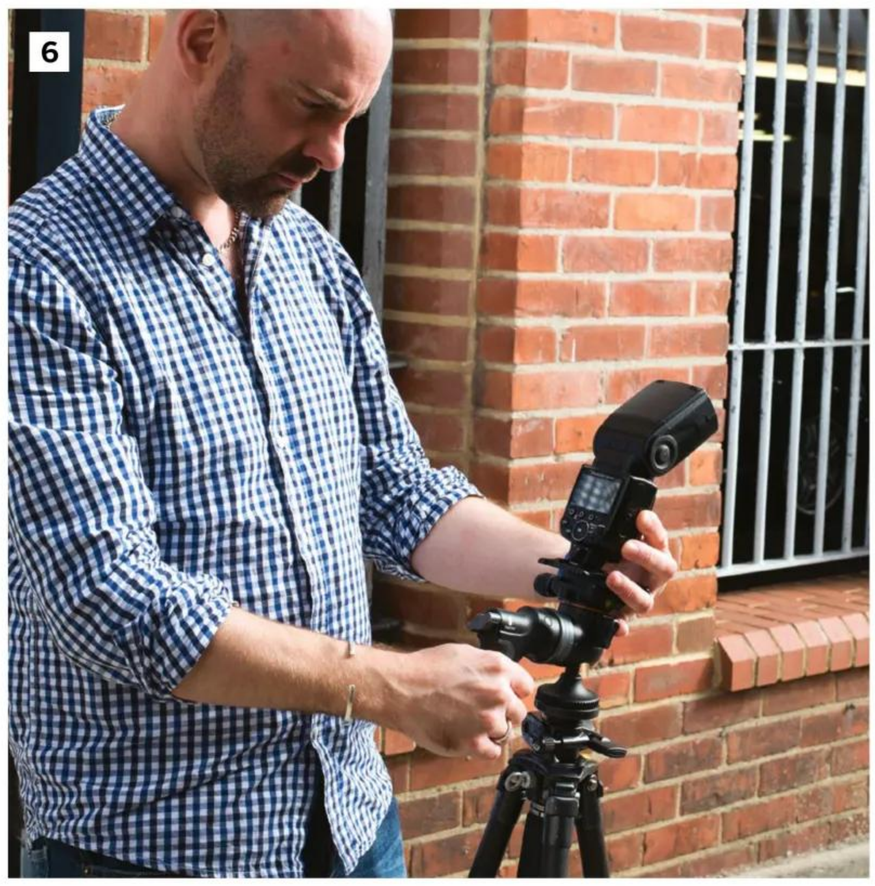

6

# Editing steps

**01 MAKE EXPOSURE ADJUSTMENTS** Adjust the Exposure, Contrast, Highlights and Shadows. Add a subtle vignette and use the local adjustment options to add drama.

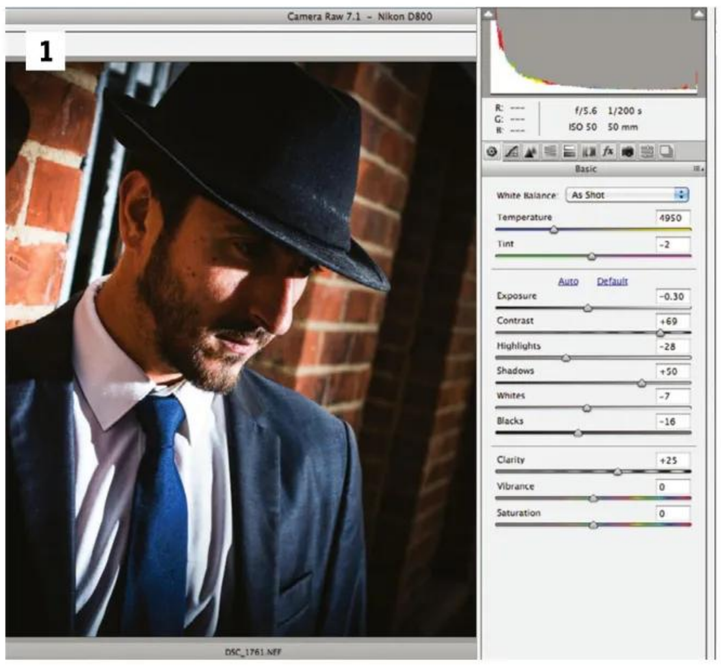
**02 CONVERT TO MONO** Turn the image to black and white, adjusting the tonal values to get the best possible conversion.

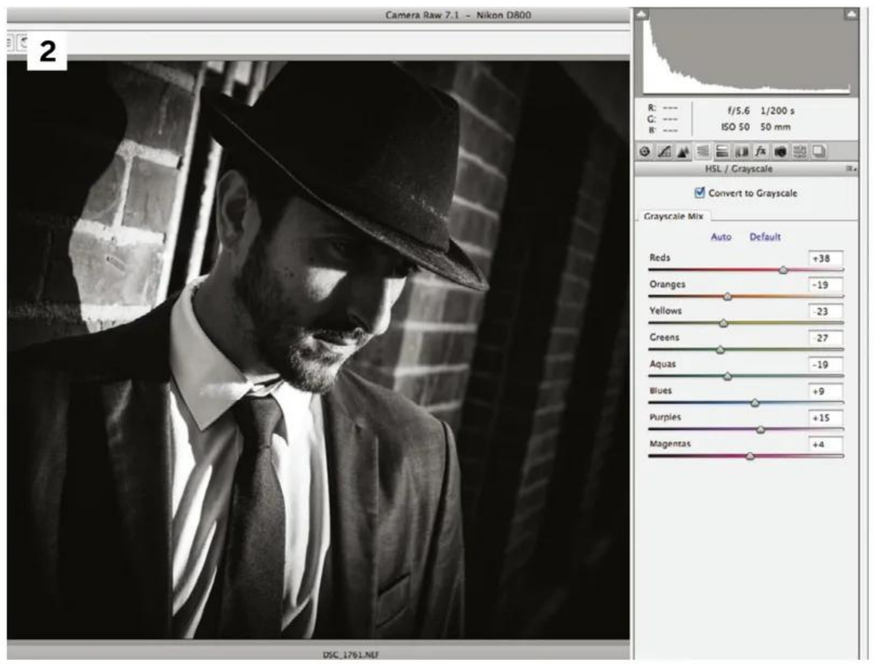
**03 ADD A STREET LIGHT** Set white/black as the colour swatches. Make a new layer set to Linear Dodge (Add). Add a light with the Radial Gradient, then duplicate this layer. Make a new layer set to Screen, using the Diamond Gradient for the light's centre. Adjust the opacities.

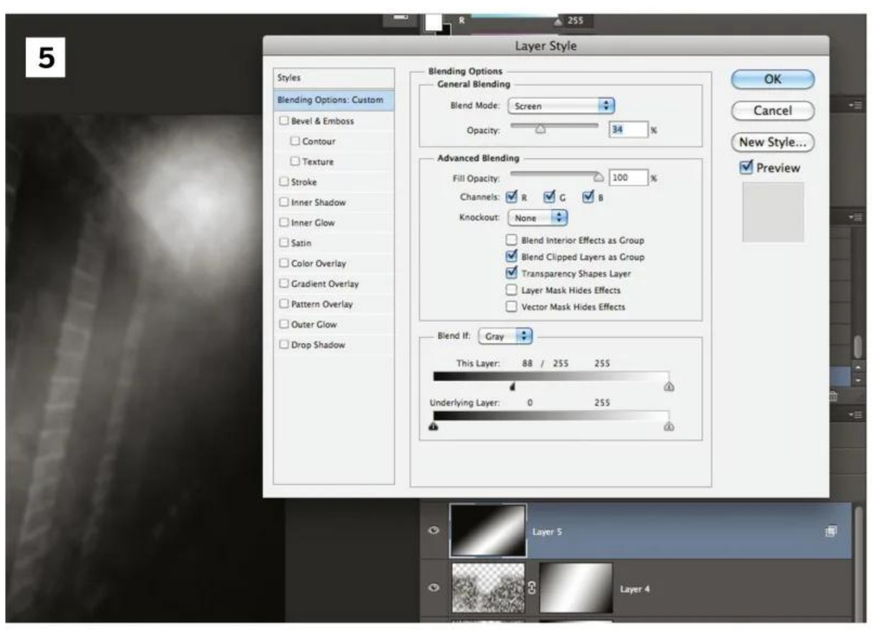
**04 ADD SMOKE AND FOG** Create a new layer. Use Filter>Render>Clouds. Lower the Opacity. Use the Reflected Gradient on a mask for more control. Use the Erase and Free Transform tools to adjust the smoke.

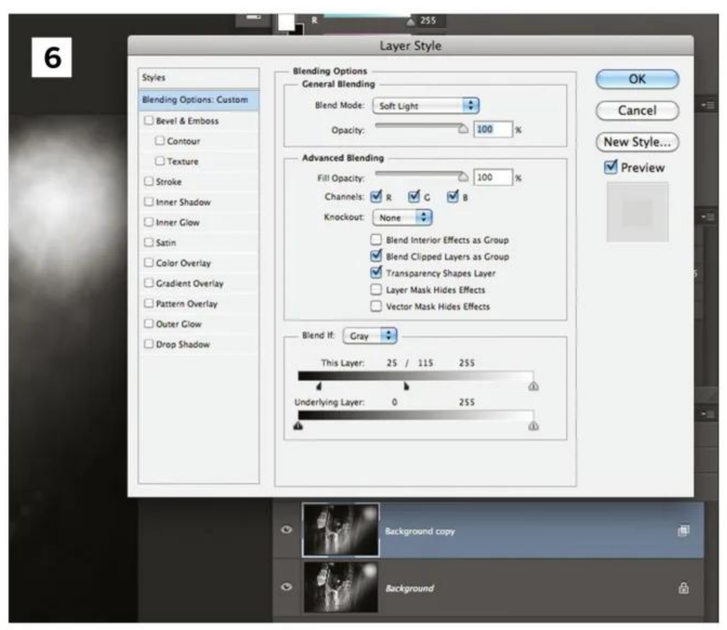
**05 SPREAD THE LIGHT** Create a new layer. Use the Reflected Gradient, then Ctrl/right-click on the layer, go to Blending Options, set it to Screen and split the black triangle. Take the left half to 88 and the right to 255.

**06 FINAL ADJUSTMENTS** Flatten the image, duplicate the layer and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Select Soft Light and split the This Layer triangle by holding Opt/Alt, with the left half on 25 and the right on 115.





# Fake a dark background

## Use the inverse square law to produce a dark backdrop in-camera in brightly lit environments

**Off-camera flash provides a relatively convenient means of producing much more effective portraiture.** The inverse square law means that light will inherently 'fall off' dramatically over distance, meaning that an object several metres away from your flash will receive only a fraction of the output of light that your flash is emitting, perhaps the equivalent of only 1/32 or 1/64 power, if your flash is set to full or half power, for example.

This means that, to create a dark background you need to have fuller control over the lighting. Often, the power output limitations of a speedlight can create problems for photographers, but they can also be used to your advantage when you want to produce a dark background in a room with white walls suitable for low-key portraiture. You need to make sure that there is a sufficient distance between your flash and the background, such that it is not illuminating the background. Indoors, this can be a little trickier; white walls and ceilings will naturally reflect the light, so you will need to angle your flash carefully and consider using a modifier that restricts the spread of light.

Follow these basic steps to achieve a similar low-key effect for yourself without any need for post-processing.

**CHANGE THE BACKGROUND**
Take advantage of off-camera flash and the inverse square law to create a dark background even in a room with white walls

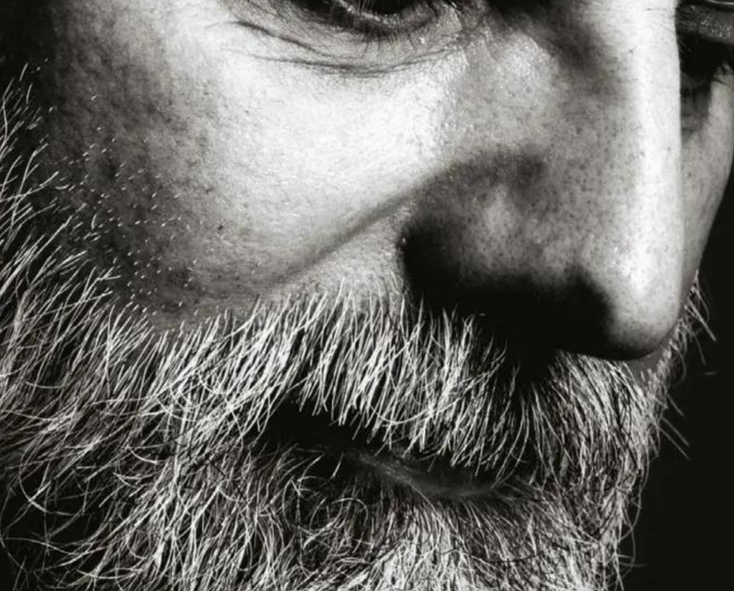
"White walls and ceilings will naturally reflect the light"

**01 Adjust your settings** To get a dark background, first set the camera's shutter speed to the maximum flash sync speed (1/200sec or 1/250sec, depending on your camera) at your camera's base ISO.

**02 Make it black** Shoot a test frame and check the results to see if your background is sufficiently dark. Close the aperture down until you have a very dark background. Here, f11 was required.

**03 Tilt the flash** When shooting indoors, tilt the flash downwards onto your subject to limit the amount of stray light that's able to reach the ceiling, as this will reflect back. Set the flash to 1/4 power as a starting point.

**04 Feather the flash** Try to avoid pointing the flash directly at the wall behind your subject. Instead, position it so that you are using the feathered light from the flash, reducing the light reaching the background.



**05 Position the subject** The greater the distance that you are able to get between the flash and the background the better. Increase the flash power if the subject needs light and decrease it to lower the exposure.

**06 Shoot RAW** Shoot using the RAW file setting, as a RAW processor like Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom makes it easy to refine the effect. If you have monochrome in mind, set your camera's style accordingly.

# Go mono with your speedlights

## It's not all about colour effects, as a portable flash can be used for black-and-white effects

**Speedlights are an excellent means of providing the perfect lighting for black and white portraits.** This means that the modifiers you choose to use are arguably even more important with black and white portraits than they are with colour portraits, as black and white photography more often than not demands something a little bit more dramatic and bold.

In the images featured here, the subject has been lit by a strip softbox to the right of the camera, at roughly 60 to 70 degrees from the camera's shooting position and directed slightly at the back wall so that the light that's reaching the model is feathered a little. This speedlight in question was set to half power. A second speedlight was positioned to the camera's left behind the subject at a 45-degree position (135 degrees from the camera position) and is fitted with a speedlight with either a honeycomb grid to control spill or a second strip softbox. This speedlight was set to about 1/8 power.

Finally, an optional third speedlight can be added behind the subject directed at the back wall – this should also be fitted with a honeycomb grid to control spill – and set to about 1/32 power, demonstrated in the image on the bottom right. Don't worry if you do not have a third speedlight; this effect can be closely replicated by ensuring that the subject is not too far from the wall, so that some of the key light is illuminating the wall slightly, and then you can go on to add a vignette effect in Photoshop, if that is what you want to do.

**HONEYCOMB GRIDS**
These Lastolite grids attach to a holder via magnets and limit the spill from your speedlights

**USE STRIP SOFTBOXES**
These create soft, diffused light, but in a relatively narrow strip that's perfect for contrasty portraits

**TWO-LIGHT SETUP**
This effect was created using the strip softbox as the key light to the right and a kicker light with a honeycomb grid behind the subject to the left

> "The modifiers you choose to use are arguably even more important with black and white portraits"

# Go mono with your speedlights

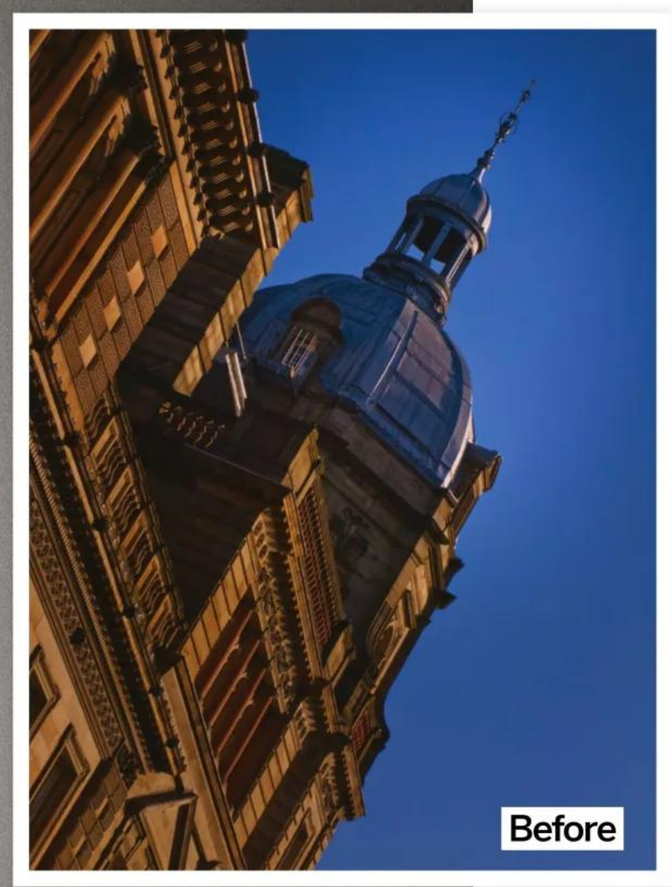
## HARD VS SOFT LIGHT

Don't assume that you always have to use soft light, which is what's created when you add a softbox or umbrella to your speedlight. Plenty of dramatic effects can be created with hard light.

## THREE-LIGHT SETUP

Similar to above, with the addition of a third light behind the subject directed at the wall to provide a sense of separation

A good black and white conversion allows you to enjoy the image by removing the distraction of colour from the building and the blue sky



# Six black and white conversion techniques

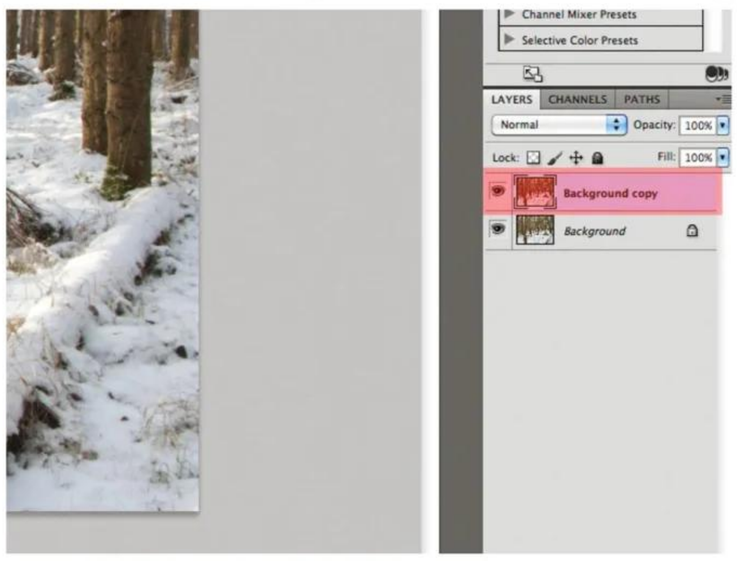
## An essential guide to six different techniques for converting your digital images to black and white using Adobe Photoshop

**Going back 15 years, creating a black-and-white image used to be for photographers with a darkroom or a patient family who did not mind giving up their bathroom.** This was where chemicals, enlargers, black and white paper and a lot of trial and error were used to achieve a distinctive look, however it normally resulted in one or two decent prints, and a lot of wasted time and resources.

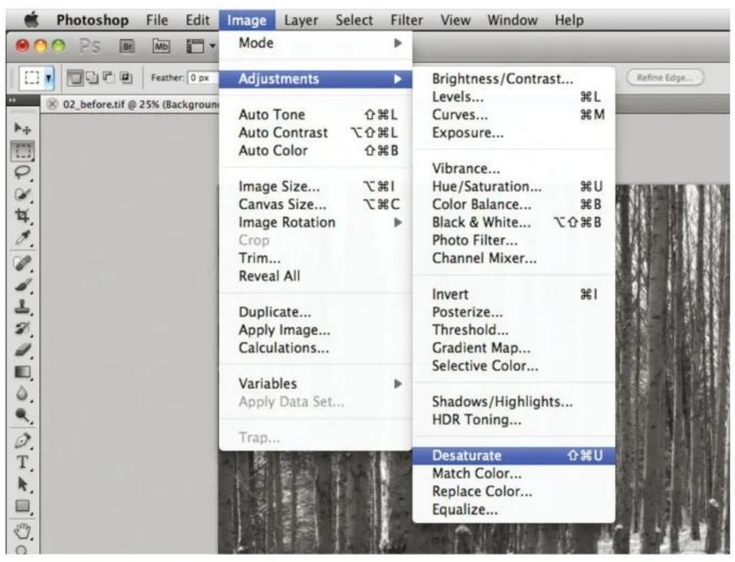
These days it's so much easier and less smelly, and there are no more headaches from not having enough ventilation! There are numerous ways of creating a black and white image in Photoshop and this workshop is all about deciding which of these techniques you are going to use. We are going to teach you six of our favourite ways to convert an image from colour to black and white. Now, the reason we do not stick to just one particular technique is because different methods are good for different image types and it would be very short sighted to just use a "one technique fits all" approach to making the most of Adobe Photoshop, which provides plenty of options.

There are more ways to convert your colour images, including in Adobe Camera Raw or in Lightroom, but on this occasion we're going to focus on techniques that can be done from within Photoshop or Elements. The key to converting images from colour to black and white is to do it non-destructively so that the original colour image and all the settings applied are retained for the future, just in case you want to adjust the settings for a different look at a later stage as well as keeping the pixels intact and tonal range crisp and bright. Read on to get started on creating your mono masterpieces.

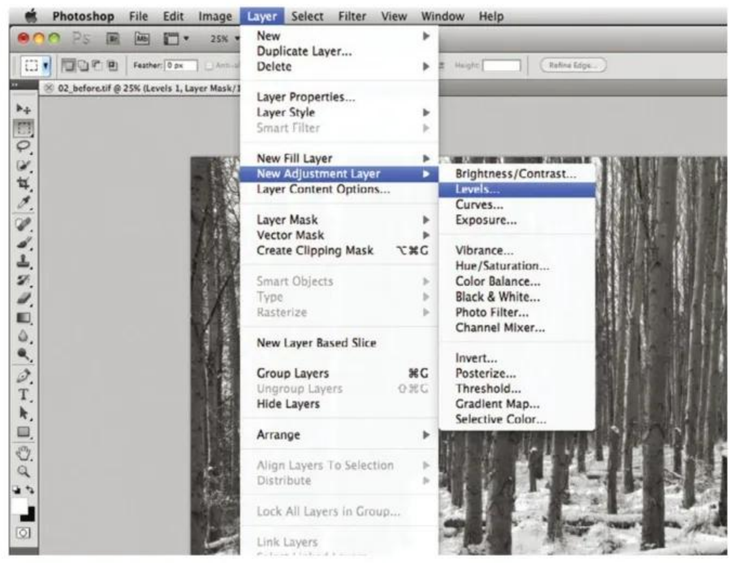
## Removing colour using Desaturate



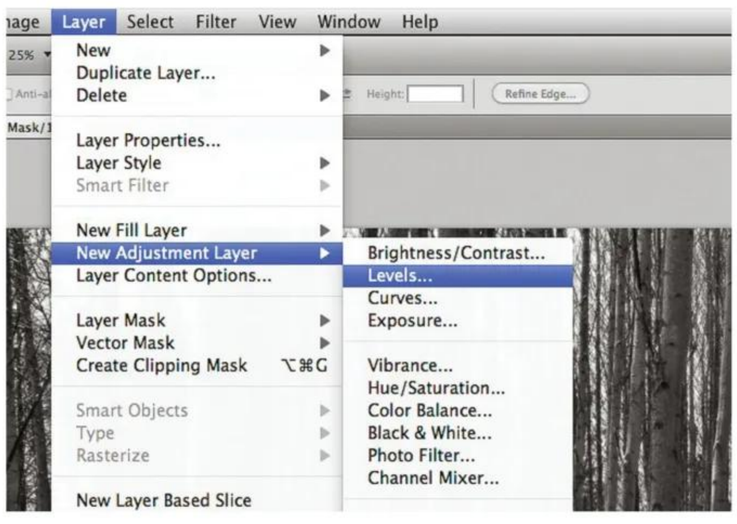

**01 Copy background layer** You can apply a desaturate technique to the background layer but that leaves you with very few options. By copying the background layer PC (Ctrl+J) or Mac (Cmd+J) you can apply it non-destructively to the background layer copy.



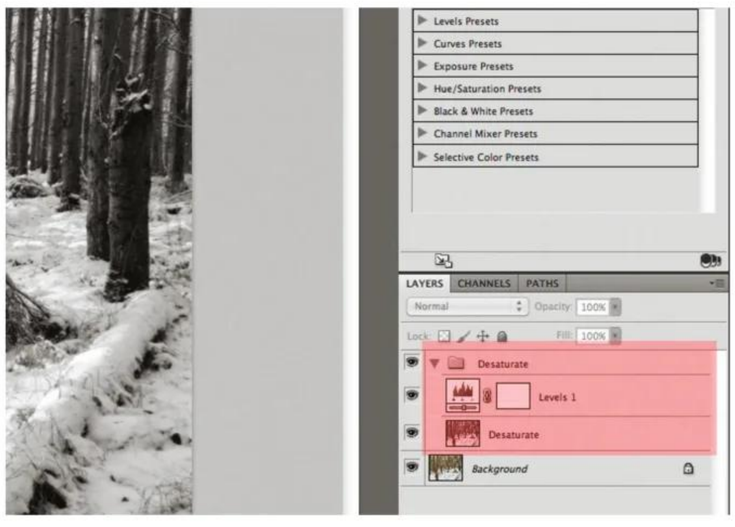

**02 Desaturate background copy** Now that we have a copy of the background layer. It's time to apply desaturate. You can either go to Image>Adjustments> Desaturate or apply the keyboard shortcut Ctrl/ Cmd+Shift+U to the layer.



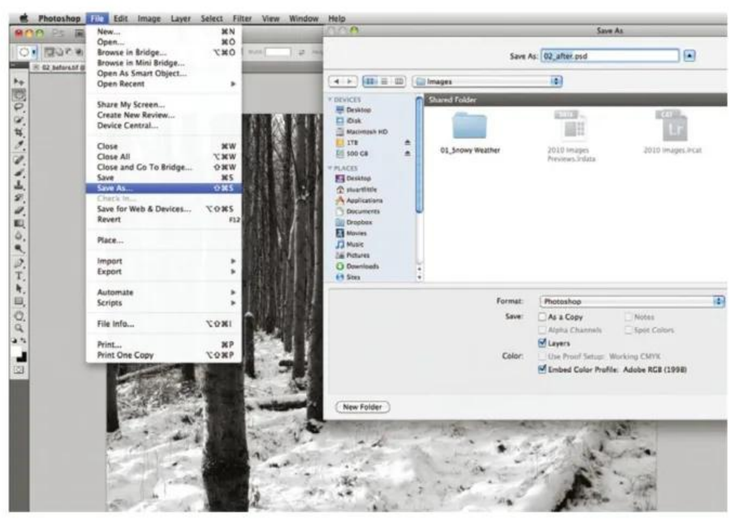

**03 Create a Levels Adjustment Layer** Desaturate produces a very flat image, so we need to correct the tonal values of the shadows, midtones, and highlights. Create a Levels Adjustment Layer by going to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels.




**04 Adjust the sliders** Move the shadow slider towards the right side by bringing it into the edge of the histogram. This will darken the shadows. Use midtone slider and move it either to the right (darken) or to the left (lighten).




**05 Grouping layers** All that is left to do is a little housekeeping. Hold down the Shift key and click to highlight the levels and desaturate layers. Then apply the keyboard shortcut Ctrl/Cmd+G to group the layers.

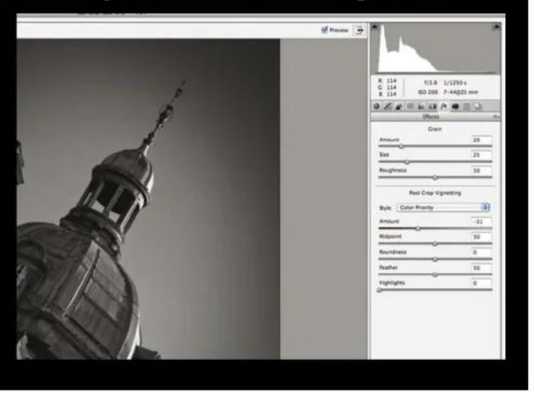



**06 Save and close** Save as PSD or TIFF with all the layers intact and ready to be re-edited at a later date. Desaturate works best with landscapes, flowers and animals etc, but not so well with photographs of people.

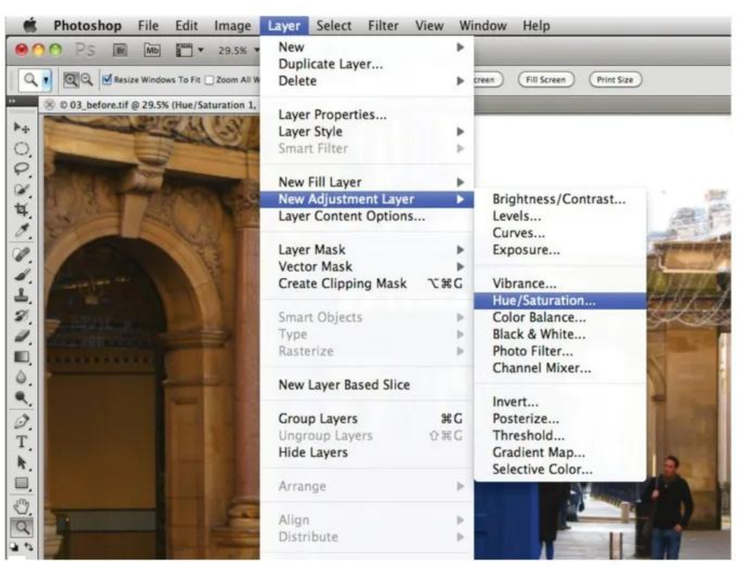
There is a fine line between creating a warm black and white or just sepia toning an image with Hue/Saturation

## Raw effects

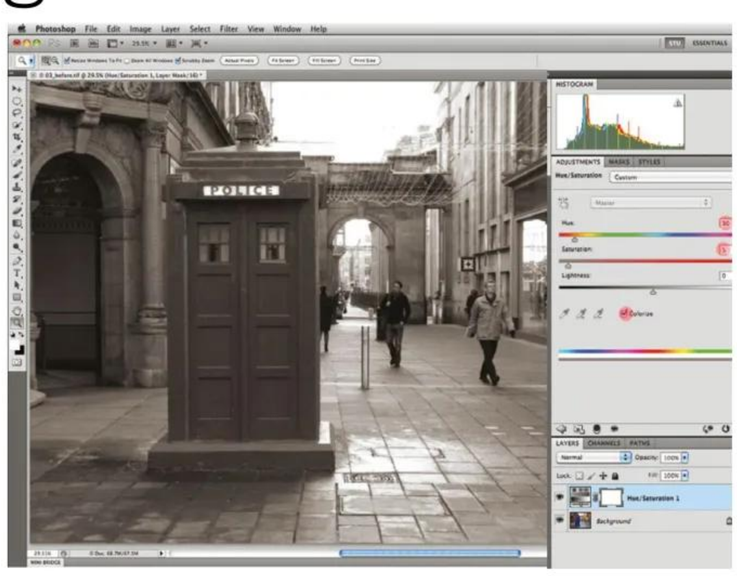
Although we are not including any of the Adobe Camera Raw methods of black and white conversion, that does not mean to say that you cannot save your image as a TIFF, close it, then re-open it into Adobe Camera Raw dialog box. This is where you can take advantage of the Film Grain and Post Crop Vignetting. Try Amount 20, Size 25, and Roughness at 50 for a subtle grain effect.



# Hue/Saturation: Creating a warm black and white



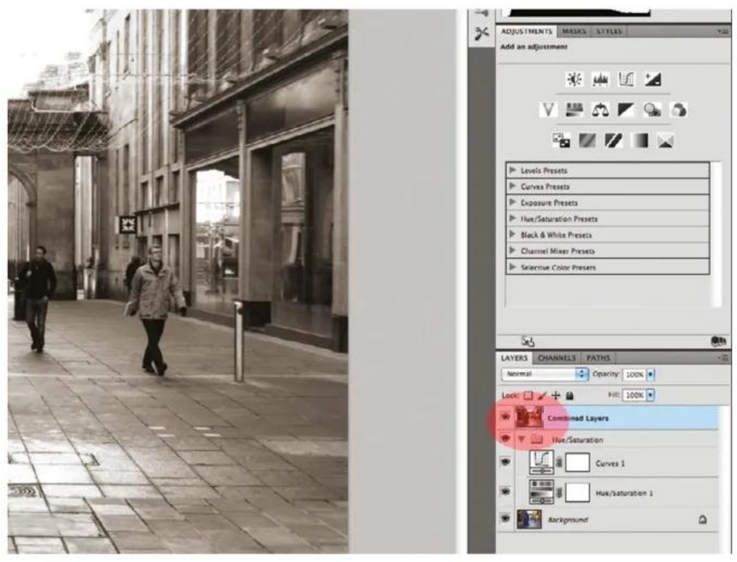

**01 Create a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer** This technique produces a warm black and white and to be able to do it, you must first of all create an Adjustment Layer by going to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation or via the Adjustment icon in the Layer panels.



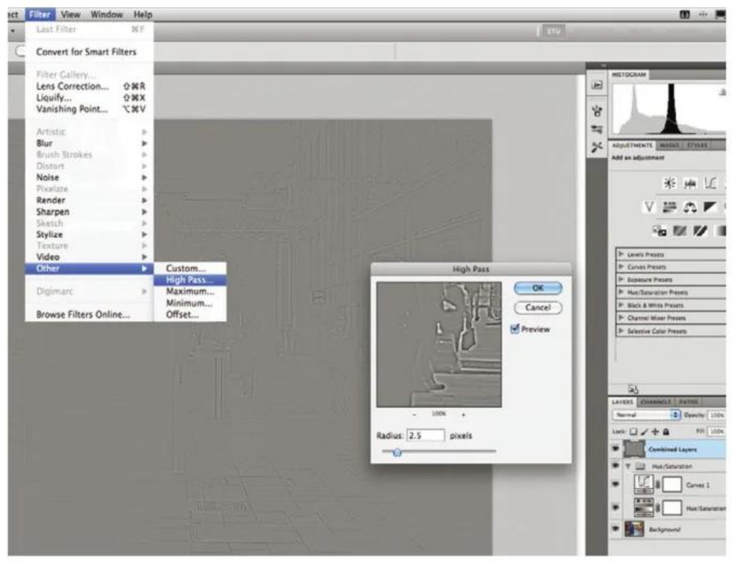
**02 Colorize Hue/Saturation** After you create the new Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer, tick the Colorize box from within the Adjustment panel and set the hue to 30 and the saturation to five. This will produce a warm-toned black-and-white image.

**03 Adding curves** Using the Adjustments panel this time, click on the Curves Adjustment Layer icon to activate a new adjustment curve and create a gentle S-curve by pulling the lower part of the curve (Shadows) down and higher part (Highlights) up.

**04 Grouping layers** Hold down the Shift key and click to highlight the curves and hue/saturation adjustment layers. Then simply apply the keyboard shortcut Ctrl/Cmd+G to group the layers together and then rename the group 'hue/saturation'.



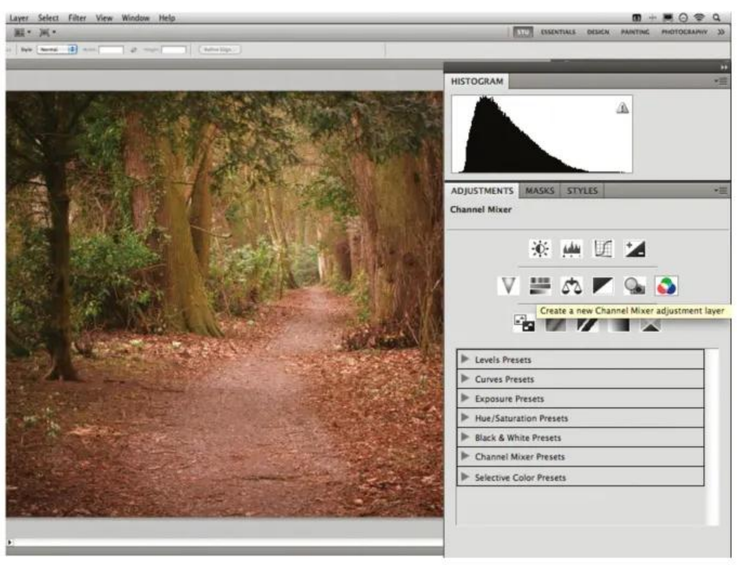

**05 Combining layers** Shift-click all layers to create a combined layer copy and apply the following keyboard shortcut: Shift+Alt+Ctrl/Cmd+E. This will then create a combined image layer that we can subsequently sharpen, using high-pass.



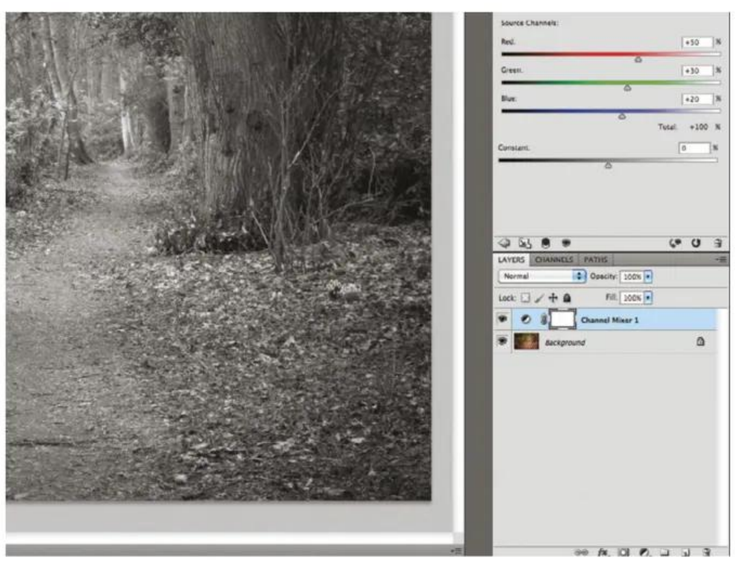

**06 Hi-pass sharpening** Click on Filter>Other>High Pass and in the dialog box set the radius to somewhere between one and 2.5 pixels. Apply the high pass effect and change the blend mode to soft light. Then adjust the Opacity to 85%.

# Channel mixer: mixing black and white with the channels

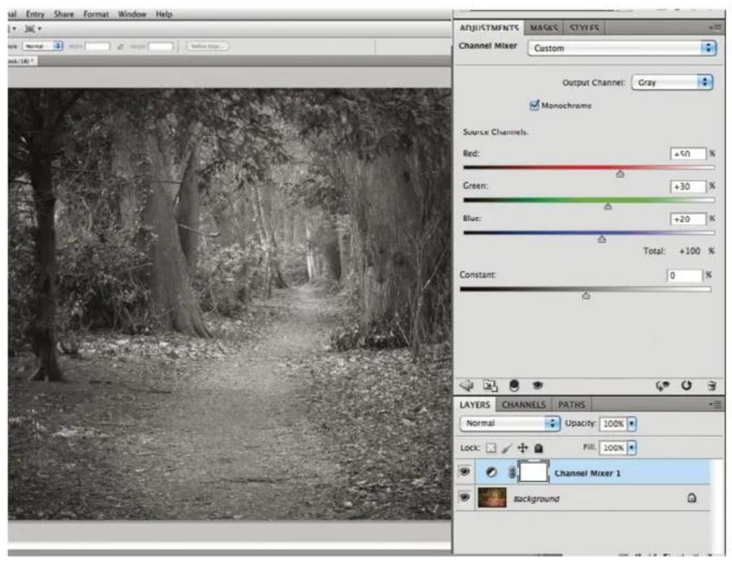
The key to using a Channel Mixer layer is to use subtle adjustments in the red and green source channels



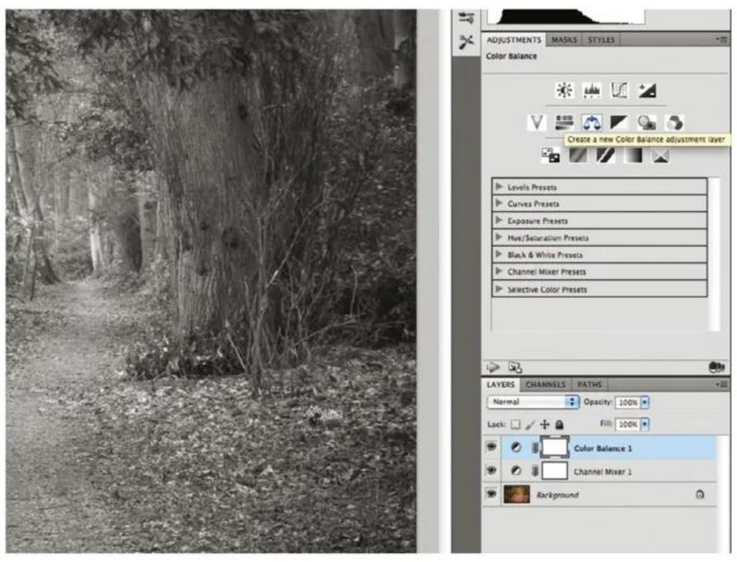

**01 Creating a Channel Mix** In the Adjustments panel click on the Channel Mixer icon to create a Channel Mixer Adjustment Layer. Or alternatively select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Channel Mixer from the Layer menu and this will also create it.



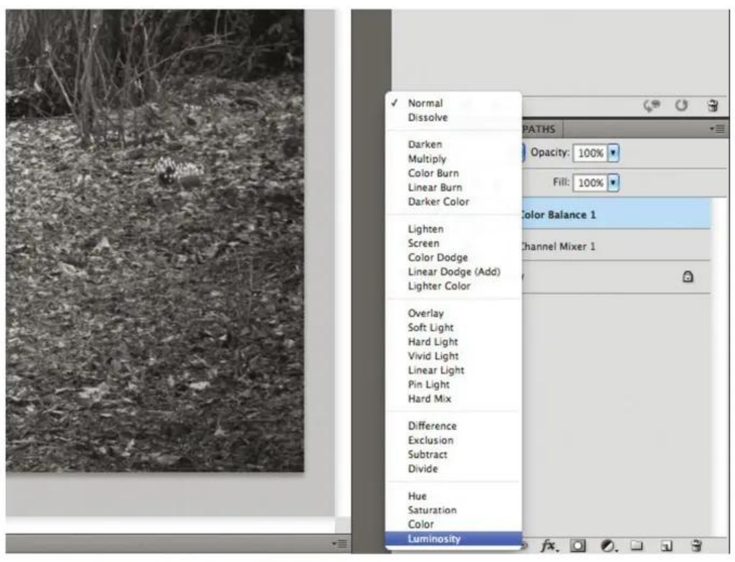

**02 Monochrome** The secret to using the Channel Mixer is to balance the numbers. The channel output should never exceed 100%. But first things first! Tick the monochrome box to turn the colour image into a single channel black and white image.



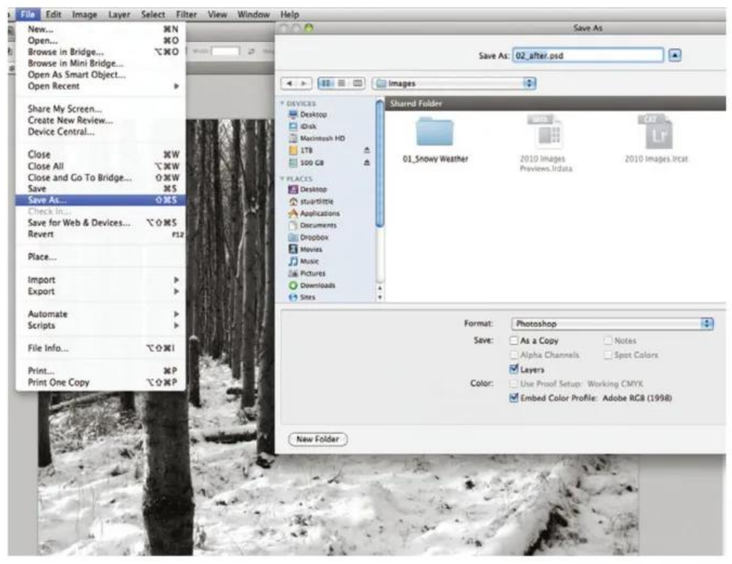

**03 Balancing the numbers** Balancing the Channel Mixer numbers is a mixture of science and art. We have set the Red channel at 50% and then divide the remaining 50% between the Green (30%) and the Blue (20%) which adds up to 100.




**04 Colour Balance** In the Adjustments panel click on the Colour Balance icon to create a Colour Balance Adjustment Layer. Otherwise select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Colour Balance from the Layer menu and this will also create the same effect.



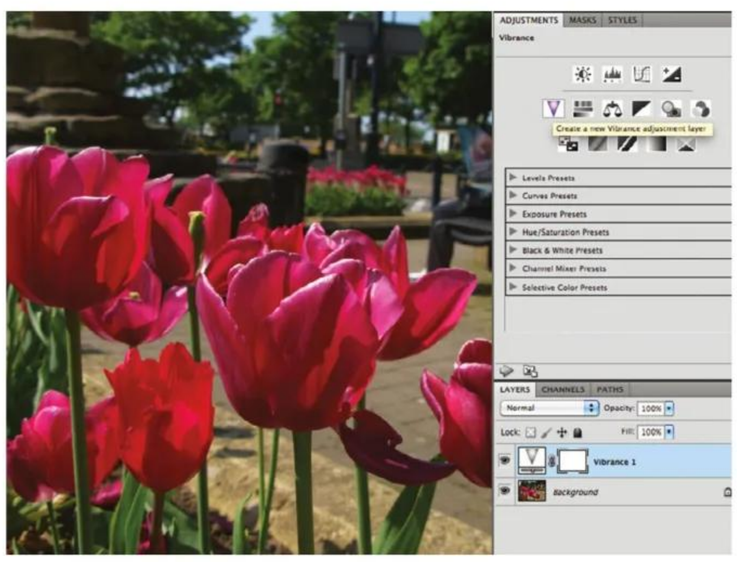

**05 Luminosity blend** If you adjust any of the colour balance sliders while in normal blend mode, you will apply a colour tone. However, if you change the blend mode to Luminosity on the menu you will alter the tonal value of the black and white.




**06 Midtones and shadows** You can adjust the Colour Balance sliders to taste. In the case of the woodland image example, we are going to adjust the midtone to 50% Red, then click on the shadows tone and move the slider to 15% Red.

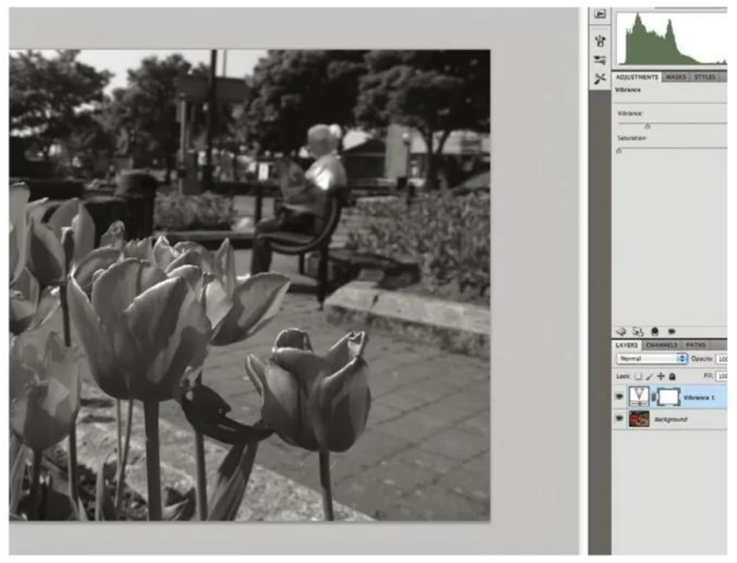
# Vibrance: vibrant black and white

Just because you're losing the colour doesn't mean you're losing the impact of the image

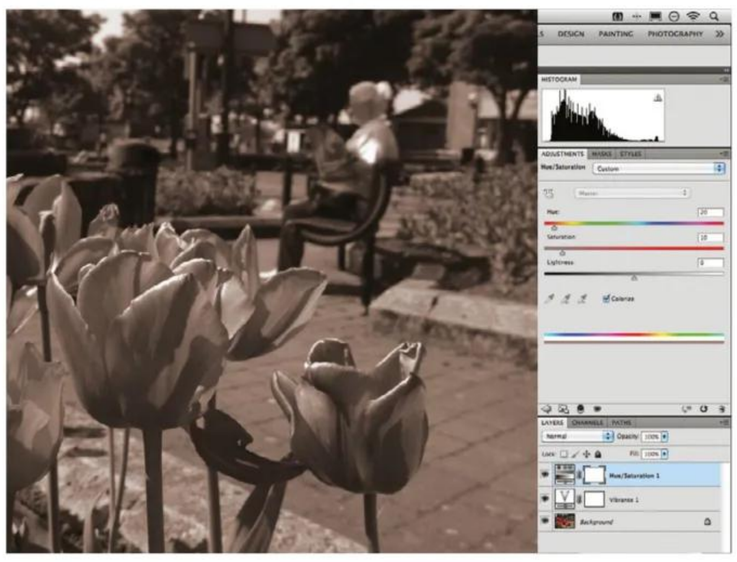



**01 Adding Vibrance** In the Adjustments panel click on the Vibrance icon to create a Vibrance Adjustment Layer. Or alternatively you can select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance from the Layer menu and this will also create the Vibrance Adjustment Layer.

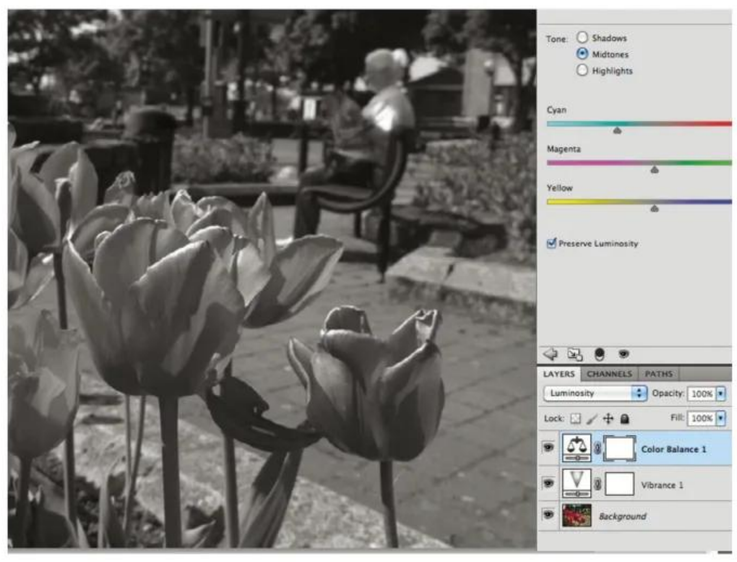
**02 Desaturate** Once you have added a Vibrance Adjustment Layer, take the Saturation slider from within the Adjustments panel and drag it all the way over to the left so that saturation reads -100. This will turn your image into a black and white shot.




**03 Adjusting Vibrance** Now that the image is in black and white, you can slide the Vibrance slider around to adjust the tonal qualities of the image to suit your individual taste. In the case of the tulips, -68 worked best by making them a little lighter.




**04 Hue/Saturation** Vibrance is so easy to do there is no real step four. But you can add hue/saturation as shown on the previous page and apply a stronger colour tone by ticking Colorize and increasing the Saturation slider to around ten.



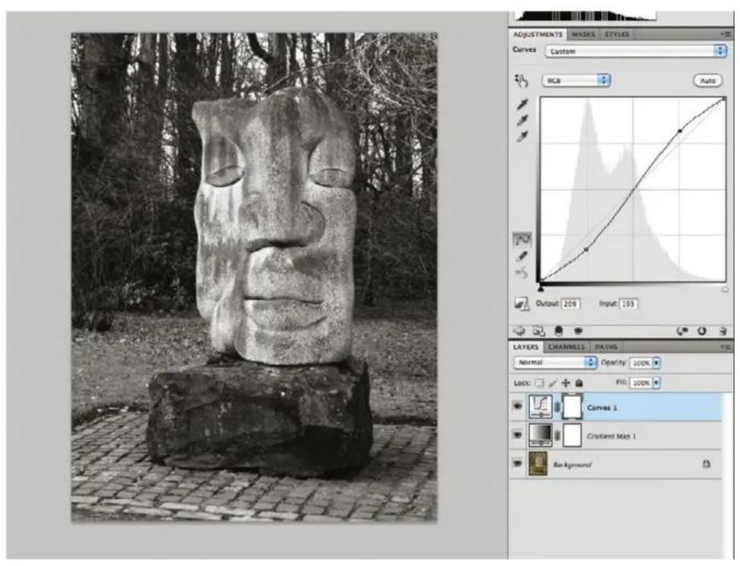

**05 Colour Balance** Another option is to once again use a Colour Balance Adjustment with the blend mode set to Luminosity. This combined with Vibrance gives you full control over the image and its tonal range. In the example we use midtones, Cyan -34.

**06 Vignetting** Finally, the last optional step is to save the image as a TIFF or JPEG and re-open it in Adobe Camera Raw. While there you can apply a vignette from within the Effects panel and also add a little film grain style if you deem necessary.

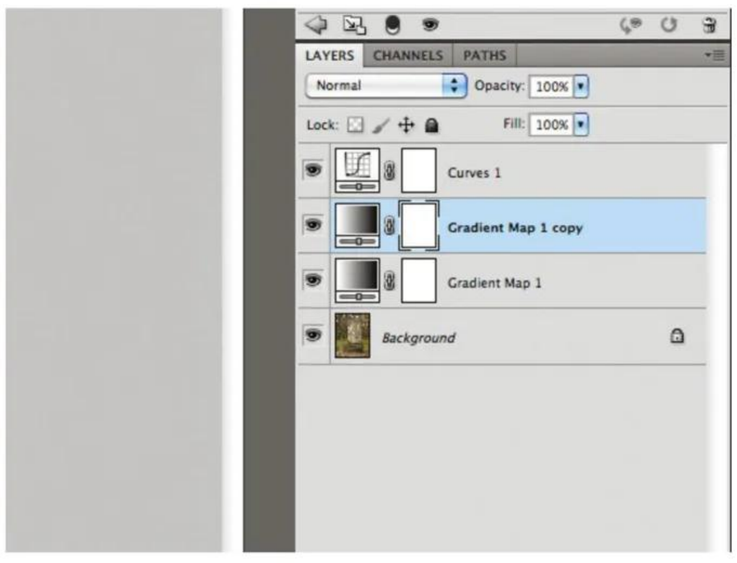
# Gradient Map

**01 Default Colours** So that you don't start with a weird looking Gradient Map, reset the foreground and background colours to black-and-white. You can do this by clicking the small icon on the Tools panel or by pressing the (D) key.

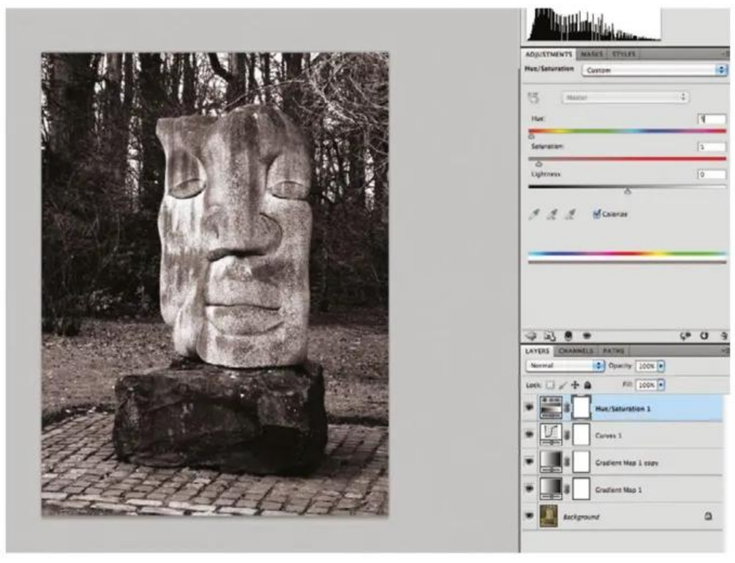
**02 Gradient Map** In the Adjustments panel click on the Gradient Map icon to create a Gradient Map Adjustment Layer. Another option is to select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Gradient Map from the Layer menu and this will perform the same task.



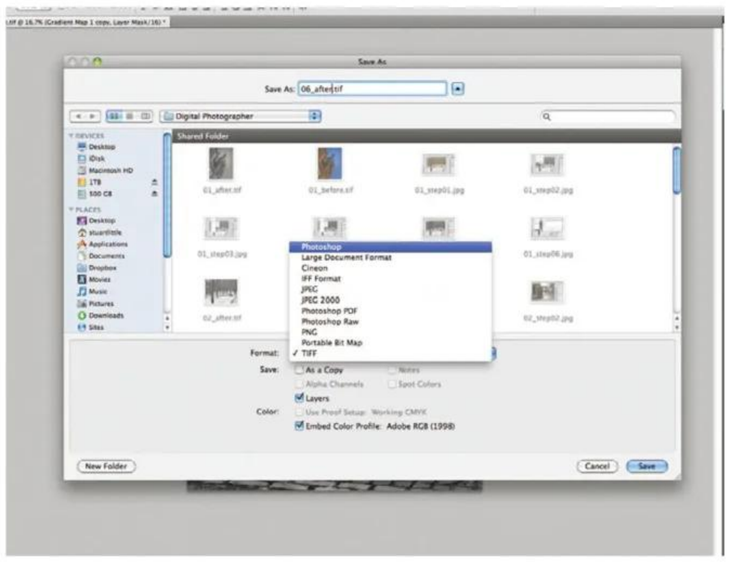

**03 Adding curves** Using the Adjustments panel this time click on the Curves Adjustment Layer icon to activate a new Adjustment curve and create a gentle (S) curve by pulling the lower part of the curve (Shadows) down and the higher part (Highlights) up.




**04 Heavy contrast** If you wish to crank up the contrast a little then simply copy the Gradient Map Adjustment Layer using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl/Cmd+J and this will double the Gradient Map effect and give you a very contrast-heavy image.



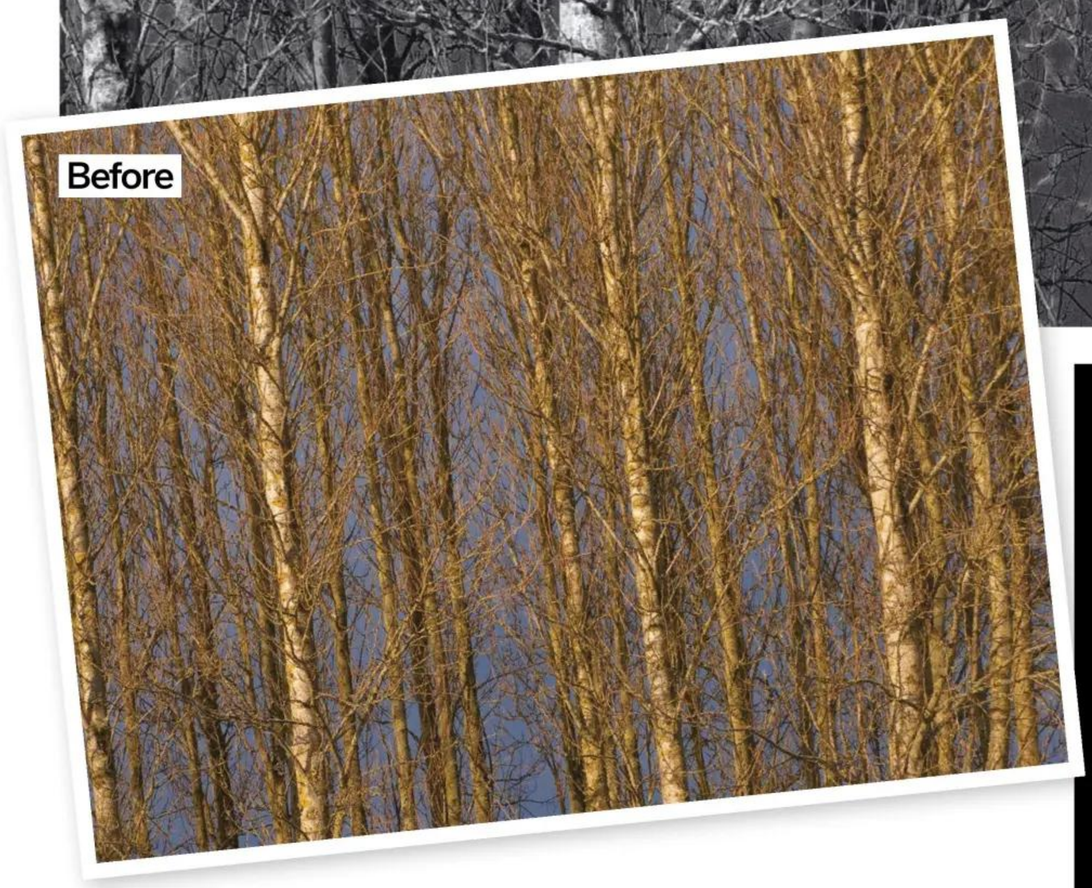

**05 Hue/Saturation** Once again if you wish to warm up your image then you can add hue/saturation as shown on the previous page and apply a subtle warm colour tone by ticking Colorize and increasing the saturation slider to around five.




**06 Save your work** This is a pretty easy technique to master but it is still good to remember to save your work as an unflattened TIFF or PSD. If you are using Bridge and ACR then go for the TIFF. If you use Lightroom then choose PSD.

# B&W Filter: black-and-white adjustments

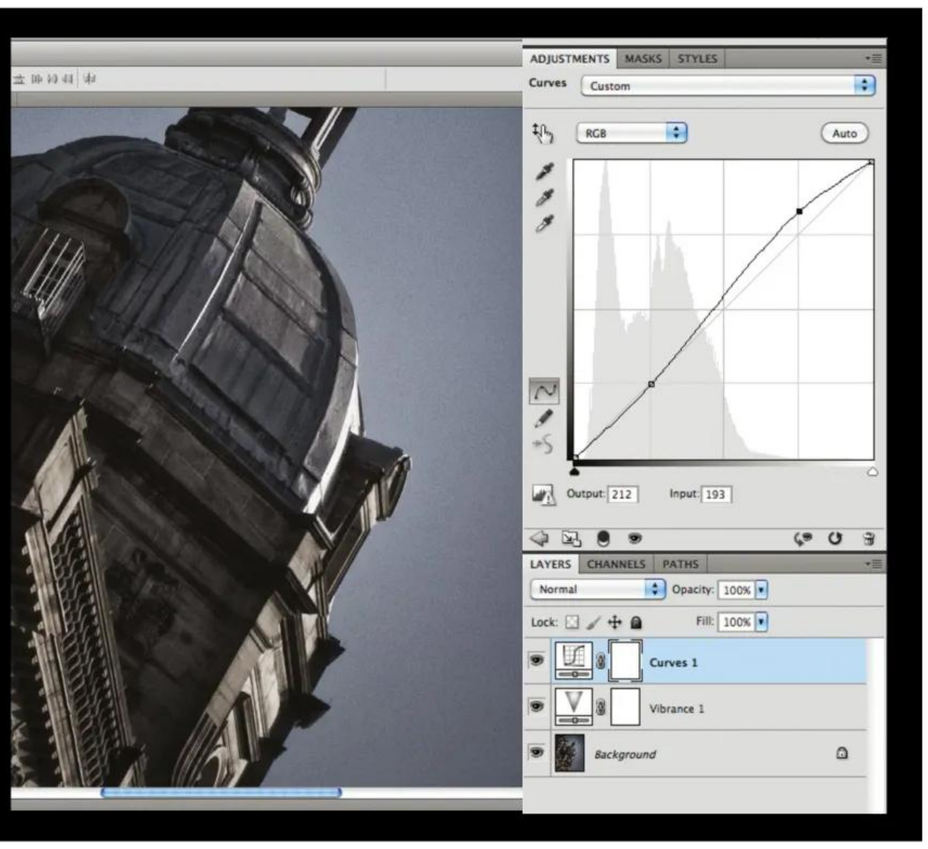
The Black & White Adjustment Layer does what it says on the tin and so much more besides



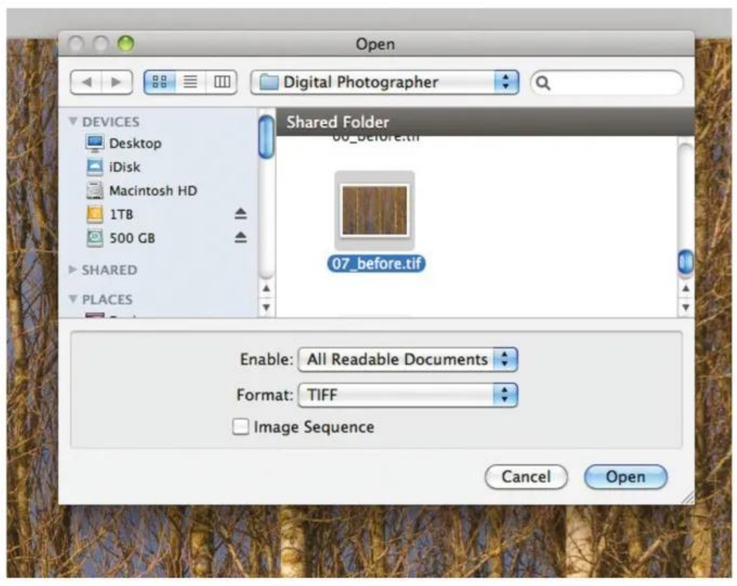

"You can make it so subtle that the viewer doubts there is colour"

## Add a hint of colour for effect

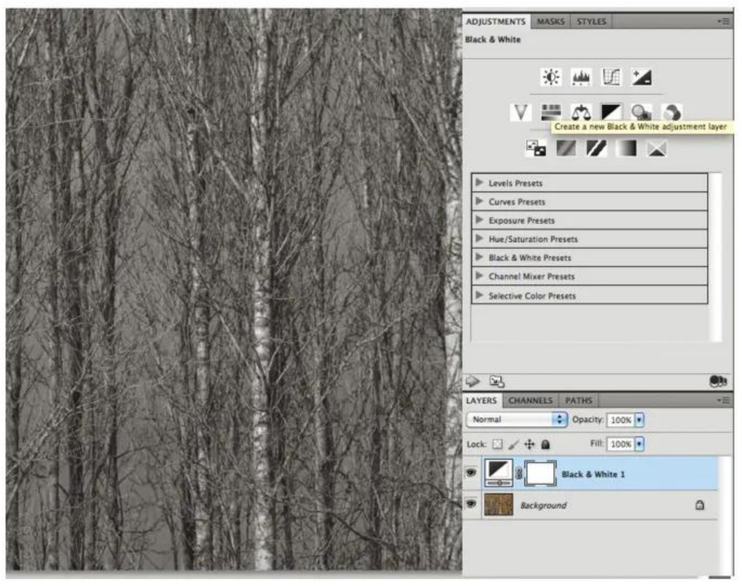
Even though all of these techniques are designed to give you different styles of black and white with different tonal values. You can also choose to drop the opacity ever so slightly on mostly all of the Adjustment layers. The idea is to re-introduce just a hint of colour back into the monochrome. You can make it so subtle that the viewer would doubt there is colour there at all.



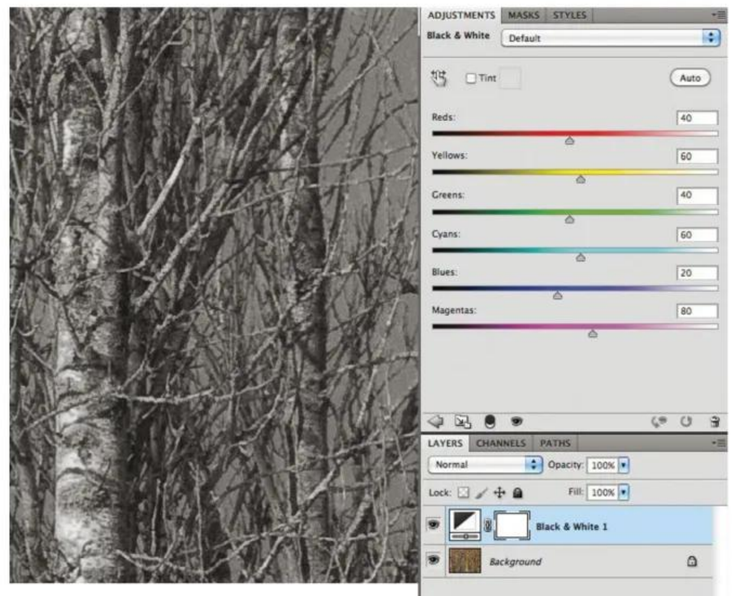
# Six black & white conversion techniques



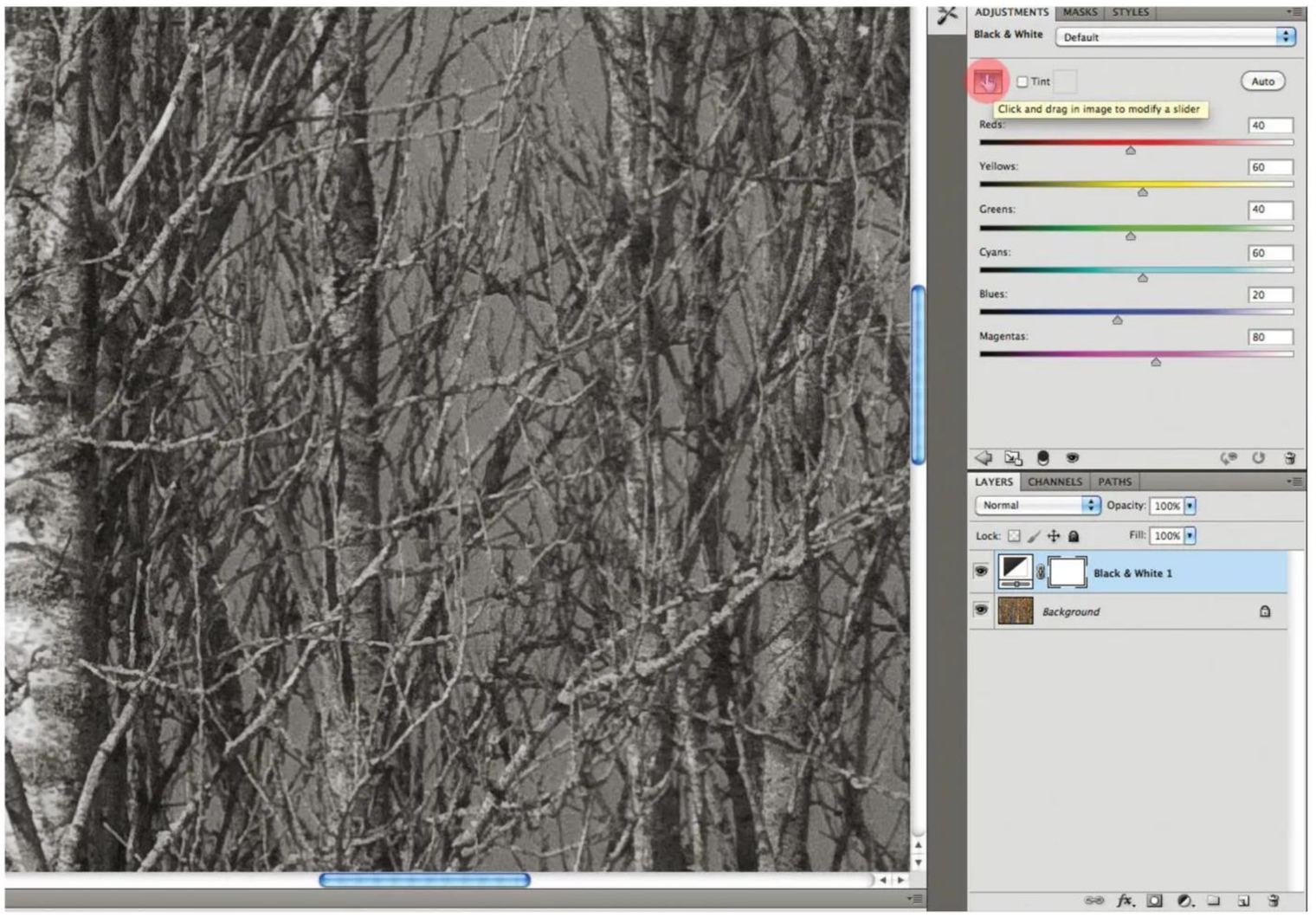

**01 Open image** We have saved the best way for last. The Black & White Adjustment Layer is the most comprehensive method of converting your colour image to black and white. First though, you will need to open an image up for conversion.



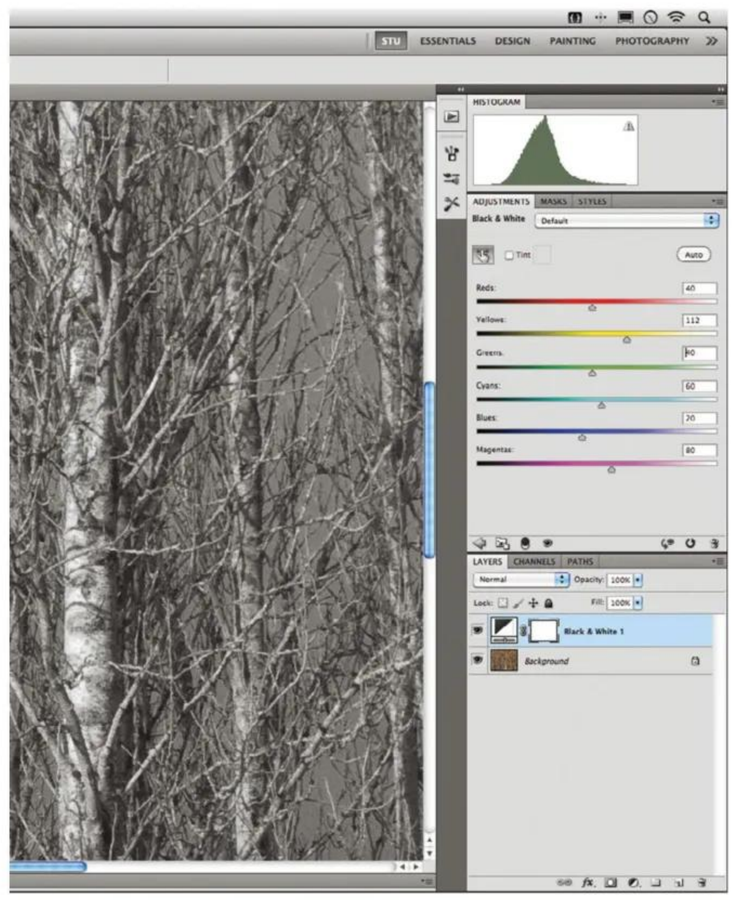

**02 Black & White Adjustment Layer** In the Adjustments panel click on the B&W icon to create a Black & White Adjustment Layer. Or alternatively select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Black & White from the Layer menu and this will also create the Adjustment Layer.



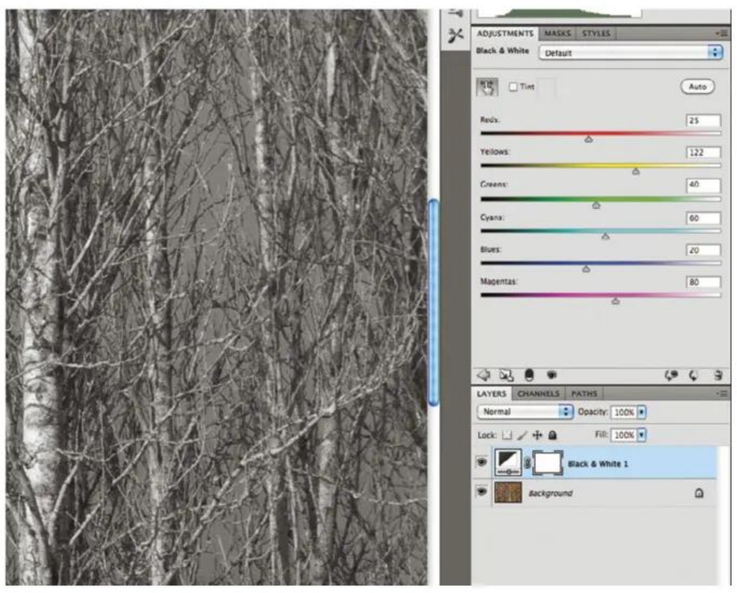

**03 Magnify image** It is normally best to work at around 100% view. So using the Zoom tool (Z), apply the new CS5 scrubby zoom option and drag the Zoom tool to the right to zoom in and the left to zoom out again.



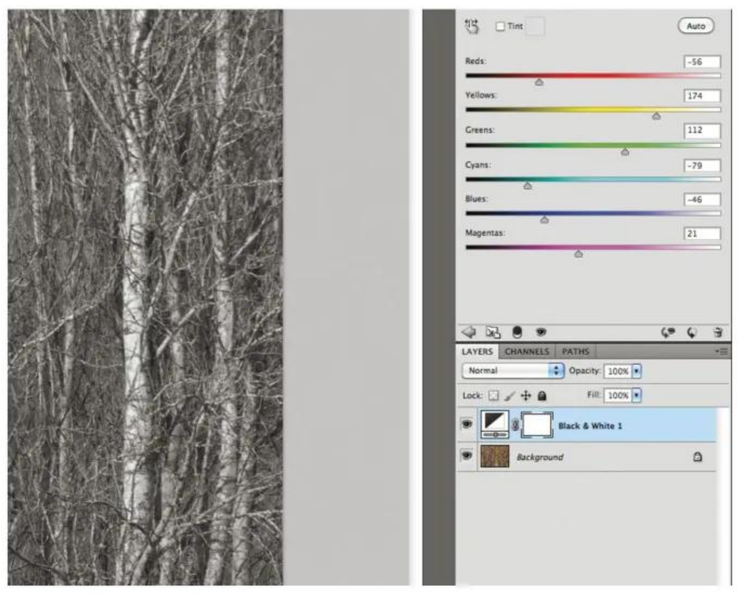

**04 Scrubby Target tool** The Scrubby Target tool takes a bit of getting used to but basically it allows us to target the specific tones by selecting different parts of the image. Once your mouse is held down you can drag left or right.



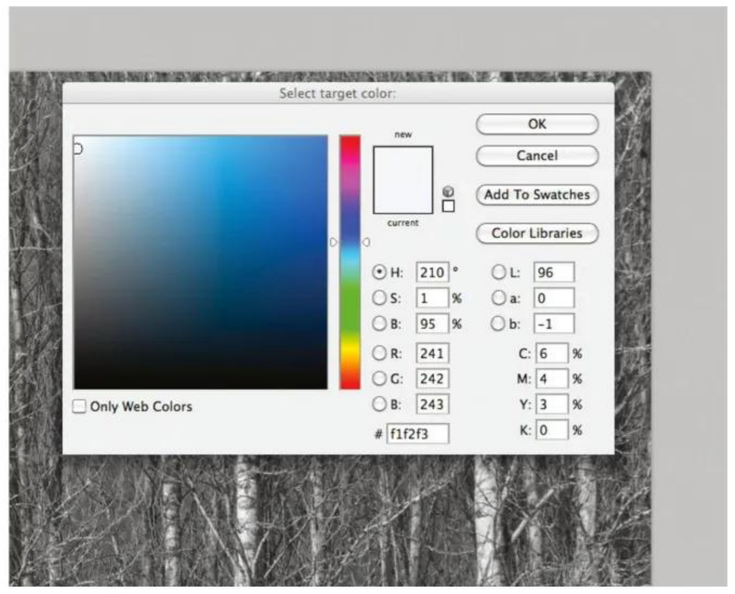

**05 Highlights** Target the brightest part of the image to start with then click and move the Scrubby slider to the right to either lighten or darken the highlights. If you watch the panel it will show you which colours are active.




**06 Midtones** You are now going to repeat the process but this time for the midtones which are not the brightest nor the darkest parts of the image. The idea is to alter the colours until your subject looks tonally correct.




**07 Shadows** Next we are going to select the darkest tones in the shadows. The aim to is to darken them down enough that we can get a good balance between all the tones but leave them with enough detail for printing.



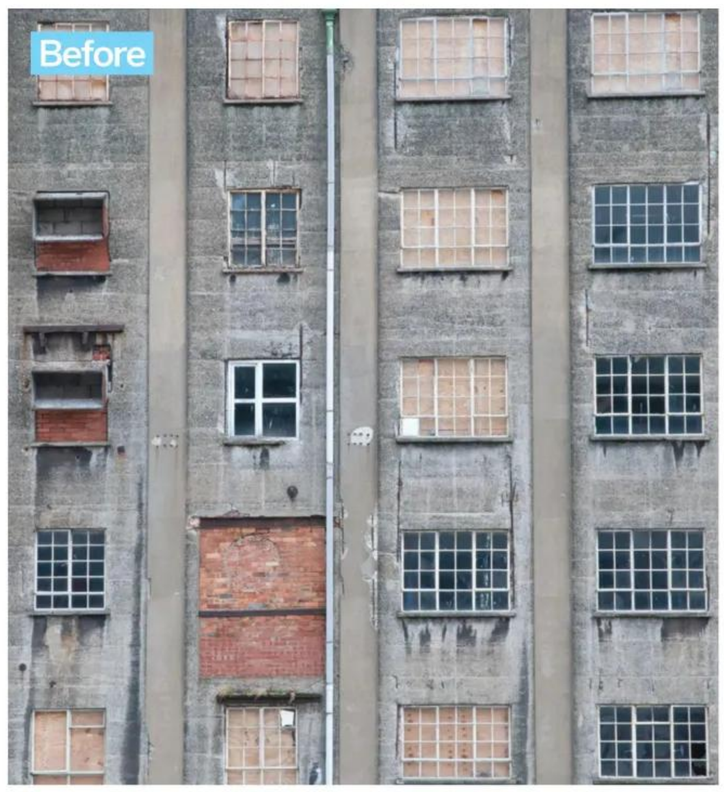

**08 Tint** Finally, to finish things off tick the Tint option and choose a very subtle blue/white to cool the tones of the image down. We used the RGB settings 241, 242, and 243 to produce a cool blue tint.

# Go mono in RAW

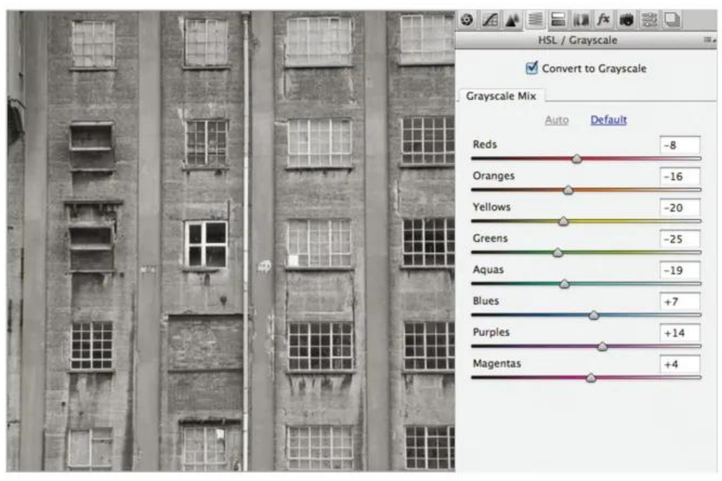
## Make the most of Adobe Camera Raw's processing interface for effective black-and-white conversions

**Monochrome has always been a very popular medium among photographers and it will no doubt remain so.** Sometimes, though, it's viewed as a get-out-of-jail option for rescuing photos that haven't quite worked in colour. This theory however, completely ignores the fact that a successful black and white photograph requires not only the right subject matter, but also very specific image processing.

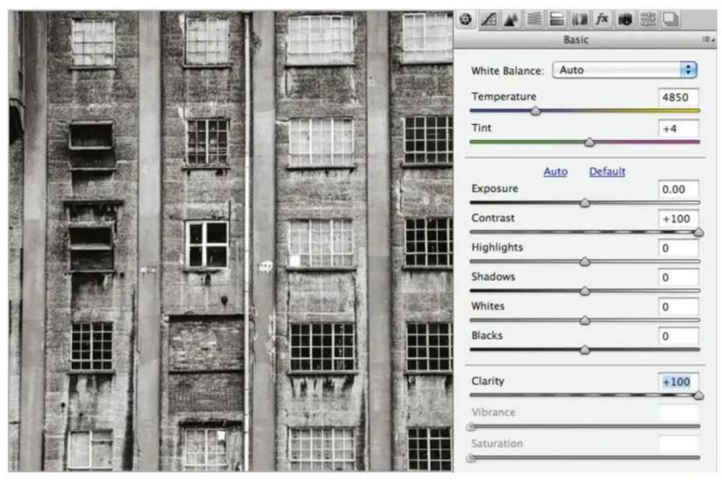
There are plenty of plug-ins available for producing the best possible black-and-white conversions, but you can actually achieve excellent results without the need to step outside of Adobe Camera Raw. All the tools that you need to create excellent monochromatic images are right there, including global and local contrast enhancement, split-toning and dodge and burn facilities, so excellent results can be achieved in a relatively short time frame.




**MONO POTENTIAL**
It might not look like much in colour, but this shot has plenty of potential for a black-and-white conversion

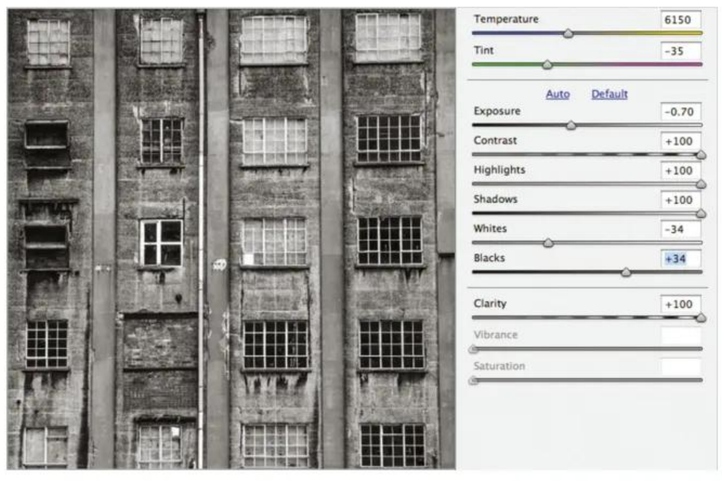



**01 Apply an initial conversion** Head to the HSL/Grayscale tab and tick Convert To Grayscale. This isn't going to form the black and white conversion; it's a starting point so you can make adjustments accurately.



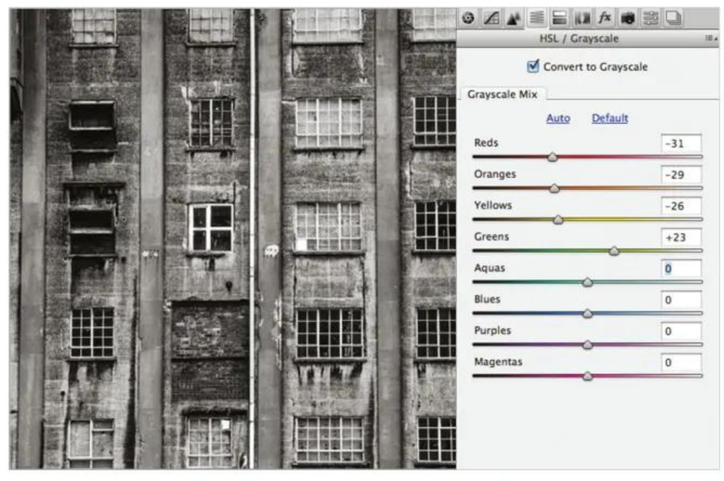

**02 Give it some edge** Some conversions fail because they are too flat and lacking in contrast. Go to the Basic tab and boost the Contrast and the Clarity, a handy adjustment for increasing local contrast.

**BLACK-AND-WHITE IMPACT**
Converting the image to black and white in Adobe Camera Raw has resulted in a much more impressive photo

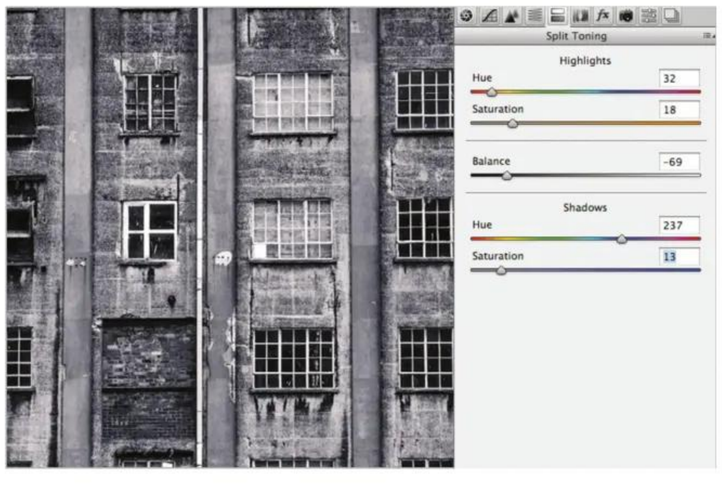



**03 Adjust the other sliders** Now you can start other adjustments, including the Exposure, Whites and Blacks. Experiment with Temperture and Tint. Taking both the Highlights and Shadows sliders to +100 can be effective.

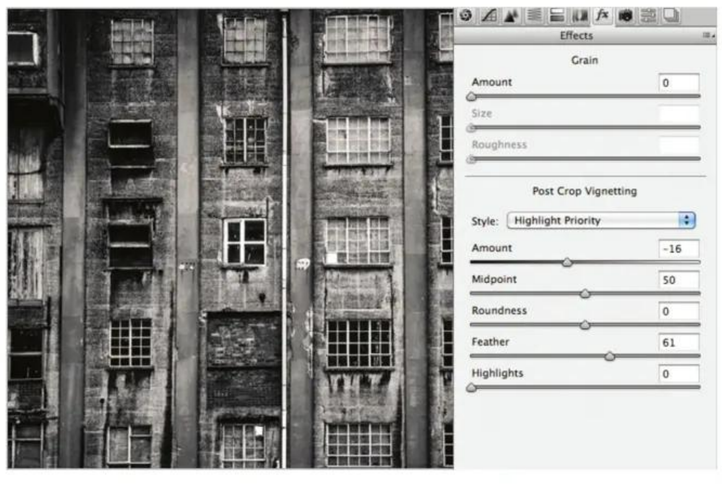
**04 Use the Tone Curve** Move along from the Basic tab to the Tone Curve tab. Skip the Parametric option and head instead for the Point window. Here, create a slight S-shaped curve to further enhance the contrast.




**05 Correct the conversion** Now you can refine the grayscale conversion that you made in the first step. Do this by customising each of the colour sliders individually. Some won't affect the image, but others will.




**06 Add split toning** The Split Toning sliders work best when used subtly, so keep both the Saturation sliders low. Set the Highlights to a warm tone and the Shadows to a blue tone, then adjust the Balance slider.




**07 Add a vignette** Go to the Effects tab and use the Highlight Priority Post Crop Vignetting facility to add a touch of vignetting. While you are here, you could also add some grain to create a more film-like effect.

**08 Dodge and burn** Use the Adjustment brush to lighten and darken specifc areas of the image selectively. Start with one or the other and then select New at the top of the controls panel on the right to switch.

# Master monochrome in Elements

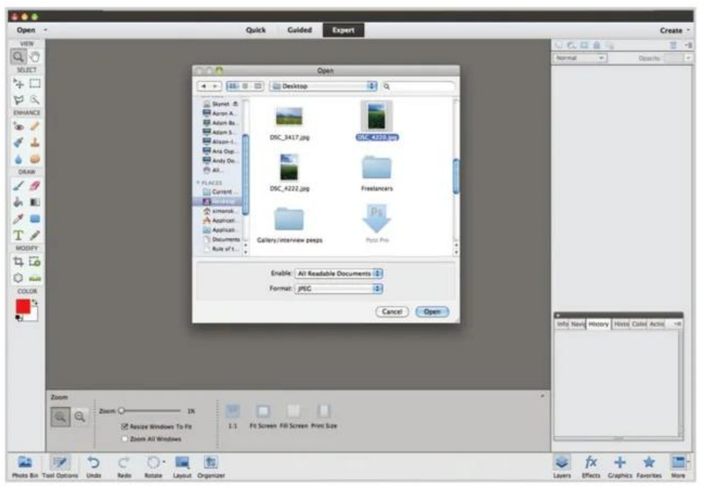
Pick up the basics of converting an image to monochrome using essential tools in Photoshop Elements

**We simply can't settle on just one method of monochrome conversion.** Using Photoshop Elements, there are a number of ways to remove colour from an image, with some producing better results than others. But not everything in Photoshop Elements is on the surface. It takes a bit of digging around to find the tool or adjustment that produces exactly the desired effect.

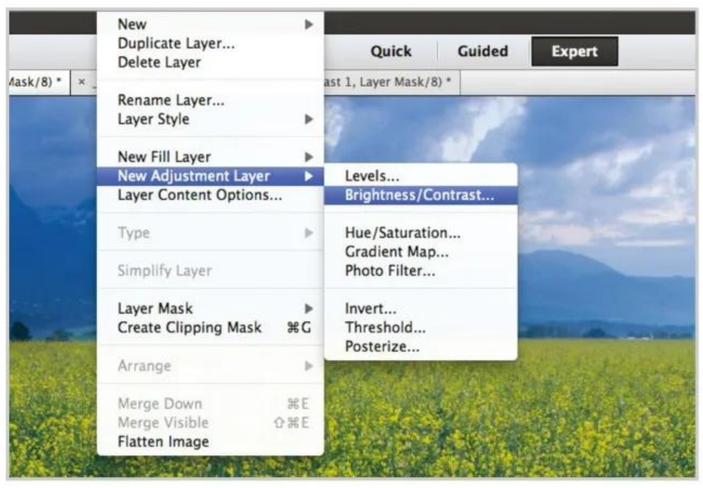
We go on the hunt for the best ways to convert a colour photo to monochrome. The following steps focus on how to use the Convert to Black and White adjustment, whereby you have multiple presets to play with that you can adapt in order to best suit your specific image.

Then there's the Smart Brush tool; Photoshop Elements's answer to quick selective editing. The tool bases itself around selections, transforming your portrait images to draw attention to the people involved. And there's also the Effects panel, with its one-click tools to carry out the conversion process with colour tints.

So the method of conversion that you decide to use really depends on the black and white style that you want to produce. For dramatic landscapes, use the Convert to Black and White method; for tinting with colour, head to the Effects panel; and for selective colouring, take hold of the Smart Brush tool.

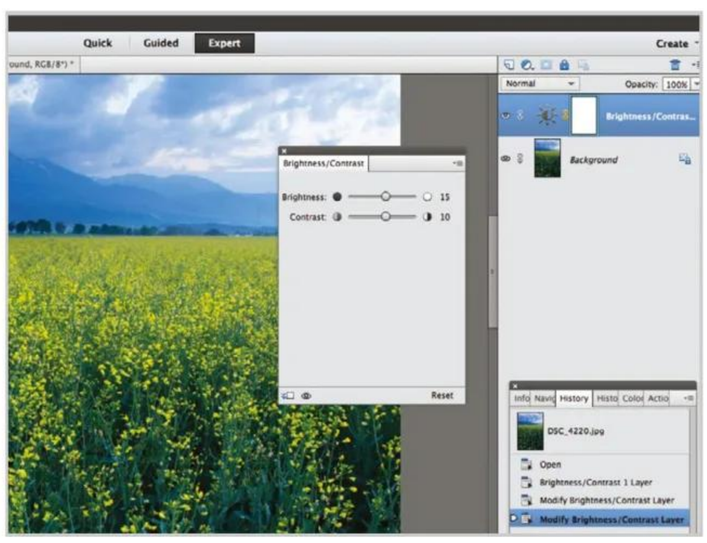



**01 Open image** Inside Photoshop Elements, go to File>Open (Cmd/Ctrl+O). Find one of your own nature-based images that you want to work on. Select it from the Open dialog. This image will now show up in the centre of Photoshop Elements as a new Background layer.

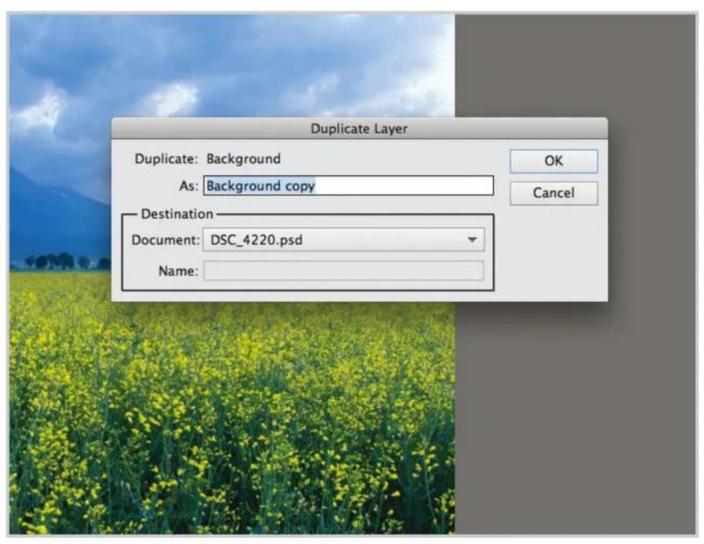



**02 Time for inspection** Take a closer look at the image by clicking with the Zoom tool (Z), or by pressing Cmd/Ctrl and +. Assess the lighting, exposure and detail in the background and foreground objects. If you see areas that are too bright or too dark, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Brightness/Contrast.

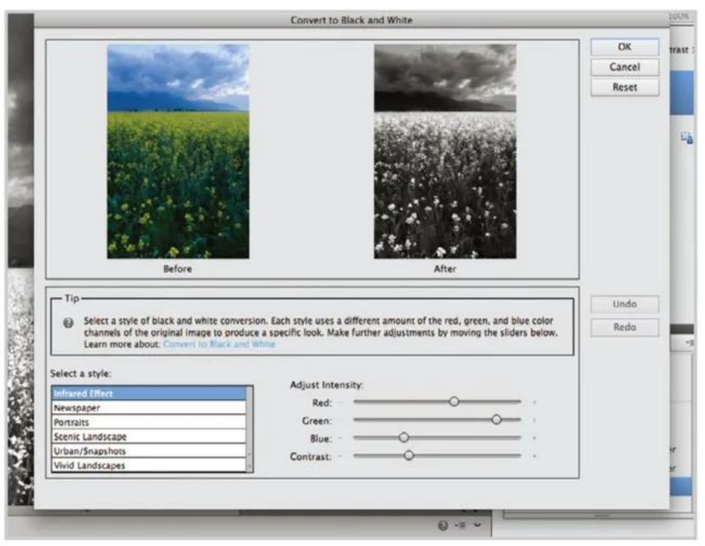
> "The method of conversion you use really depends on the style you want to produce"




**03 Boost lighting** To boost the brightness of this landscape image, move the Brightness slider up to 15. Increase the Contrast slider to around 10. This should prepare the image better for monochrome conversion, and as an Adjustment layer these changes are permanent.



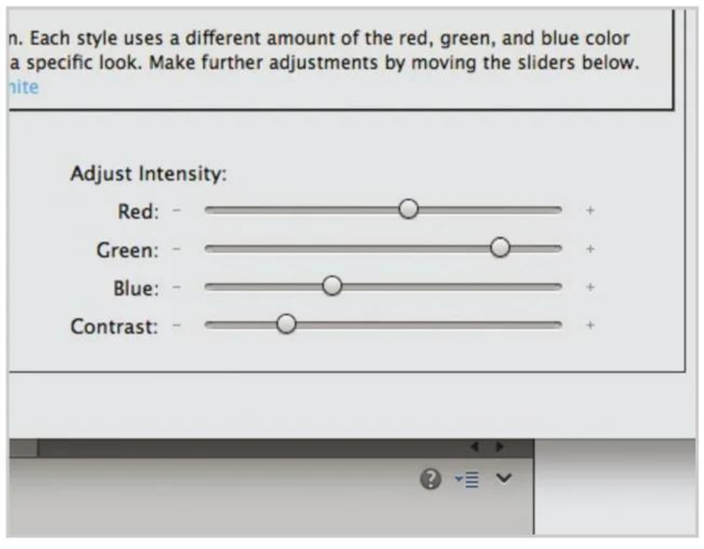

**04 Make a copy** Click on the Background layer in the layer stack. To help work non-destructively in Photoshop Elements, go to the Layer menu at the top of the interface and down to Duplicate Layer. We'll be renaming this layer later on, so leave it as Background Copy for now. Hit OK.




**05 Infrared Style** Convert the image to monochrome by going to Enhance>Convert to Black and White. Inside this Adjustment's menu is a before and after of your image and a few Style presets. Select the Infrared Effect Style to boost highlights, shadows and midtones for an expressive greyscale image.

## Simple conversion

There's a method in Photoshop Elements that's instant for converting a colour image to monochrome. To use this method, go to the Enhance menu and down to Adjust Colour>Remove Colour. The shortcut for this is Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U. The actual conversion is only a basic one, and is used for simple monochrome effects. This can lack the punch that other methods produce, such as when using the Convert to Black and White feature.

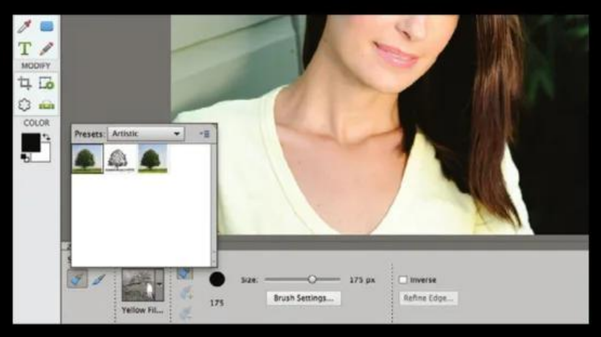

n. Each style uses a different amount of the red, green, and blue color
a specific look. Make further adjustments by moving the sliders below.
Adjust Intensity:
Red:
Green:
Blue:
Contrast:

**06 Control contrast** The Infrared Effect Style will blow out the highlights in the image, such as those in the field in our example image. To reduce the exposure in the highlight regions, gradually lower the Contrast slider in small amounts until you see the whites reduce in strength.

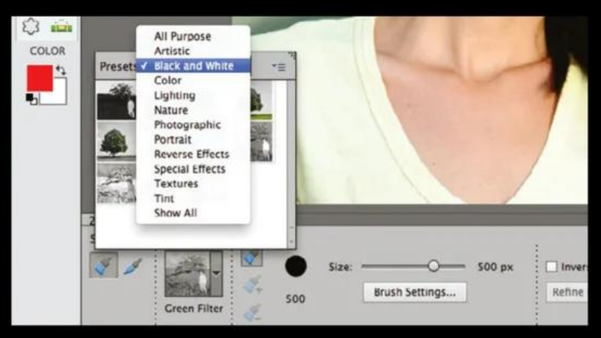
**07 Better balance** Lowering the Contrast slider will flatten the whole image. To bring vibrancy back into the sky and mountains, you will need to boost the Blue slider ever so slightly. Small changes when working in this medium go a long way. Finally, lower the Green and Red sliders. Hit OK.

# Selective effects

## Create instant monochrome effects in your portraits



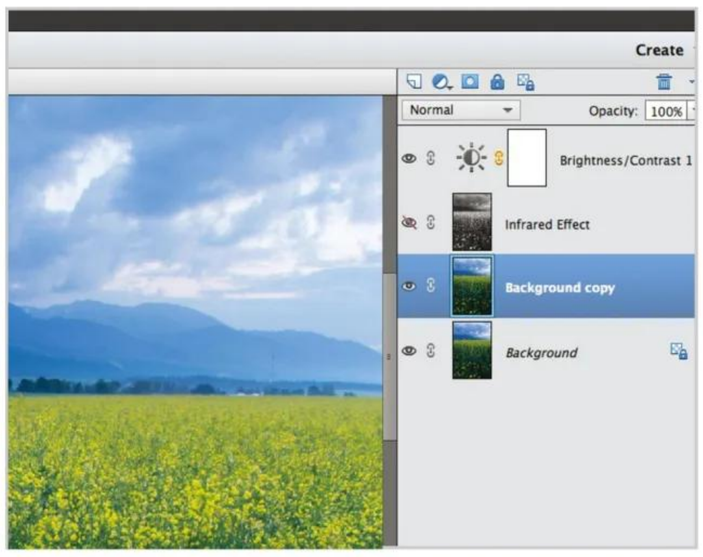
**Select tool** The Smart Brush tool (F) in Photoshop Elements is a quick-fire method for creating selective monochrome effects. Select this tool from the Toolbar and, in the tool's options, click on the picture thumbnail.



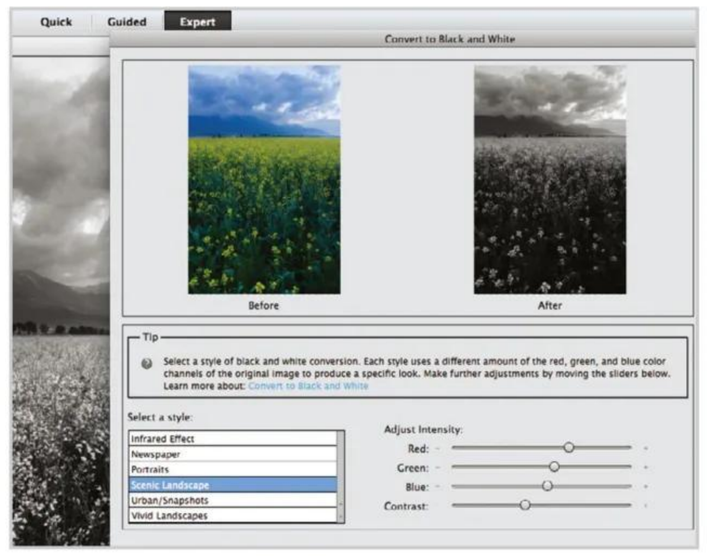

**Presets galore** Categorise the Presets by Black and White for the monochrome options. Select the Green Lens Filter as a good effect to start with. There are other presets, such as Yellow Lens Filter, which can be easily swapped out at any stage.

**In a click!** Set the Smart Brush's size so it's large enough to cover the subject you're converting to monochrome; for example, 500px. Then just click and drag over a part of your image to apply the effect selectively to certain subjects.

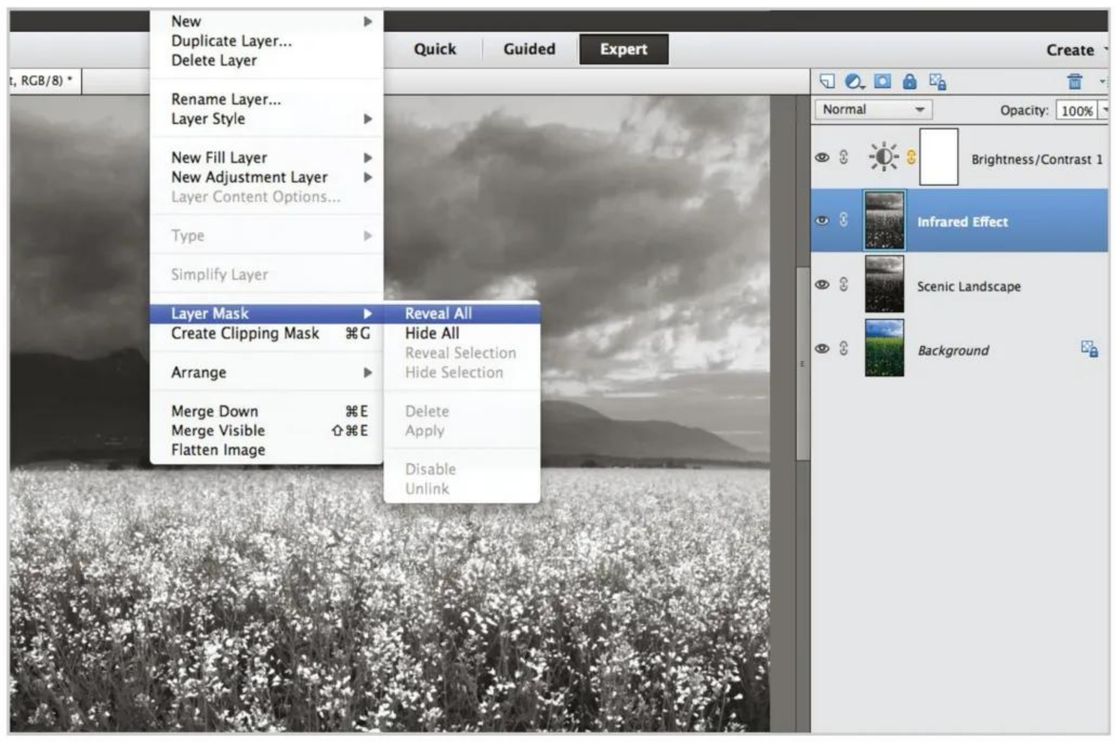
**Adapt style** Hold Opt/Alt and click over areas that you want to keep in colour. Change the style of the monochrome effect by clicking on the different Black and White presets to see the contrast setting that looks best.




**08** **Stay organised** Double-click on the infrared layer to rename it 'Infrared Effect'. This helps to identify which monochrome setting was used. Click onto the original Background layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+J to make another duplicate of it. Click on the eye button next to the Infrared Effect layer to hide it.




**09** **Scenic route** Now head back over to the Convert to Black and White adjustment under the Enhance menu, and this time click on the Scenic Landscape Style. For this effect, boost the Contrast slider up slightly and then hit OK to apply the effect. Rename this new layer 'Scenic Landscape'.




**10** **Reveal mask** Click on the Infrared Effect layer to select it. Now add a layer mask by heading over to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. You should see a white mask appear on this layer, highlighted blue to indicate that it's currently the active layer.




**11** **Colour setup** To edit your new layer mask, set your Foreground colour to black by clicking on the top swatch at the base of the Toolbar. Drag the colour selector to the bottom left corner and hit OK. A mask uses black and white paint to reveal or hide parts of its layer.

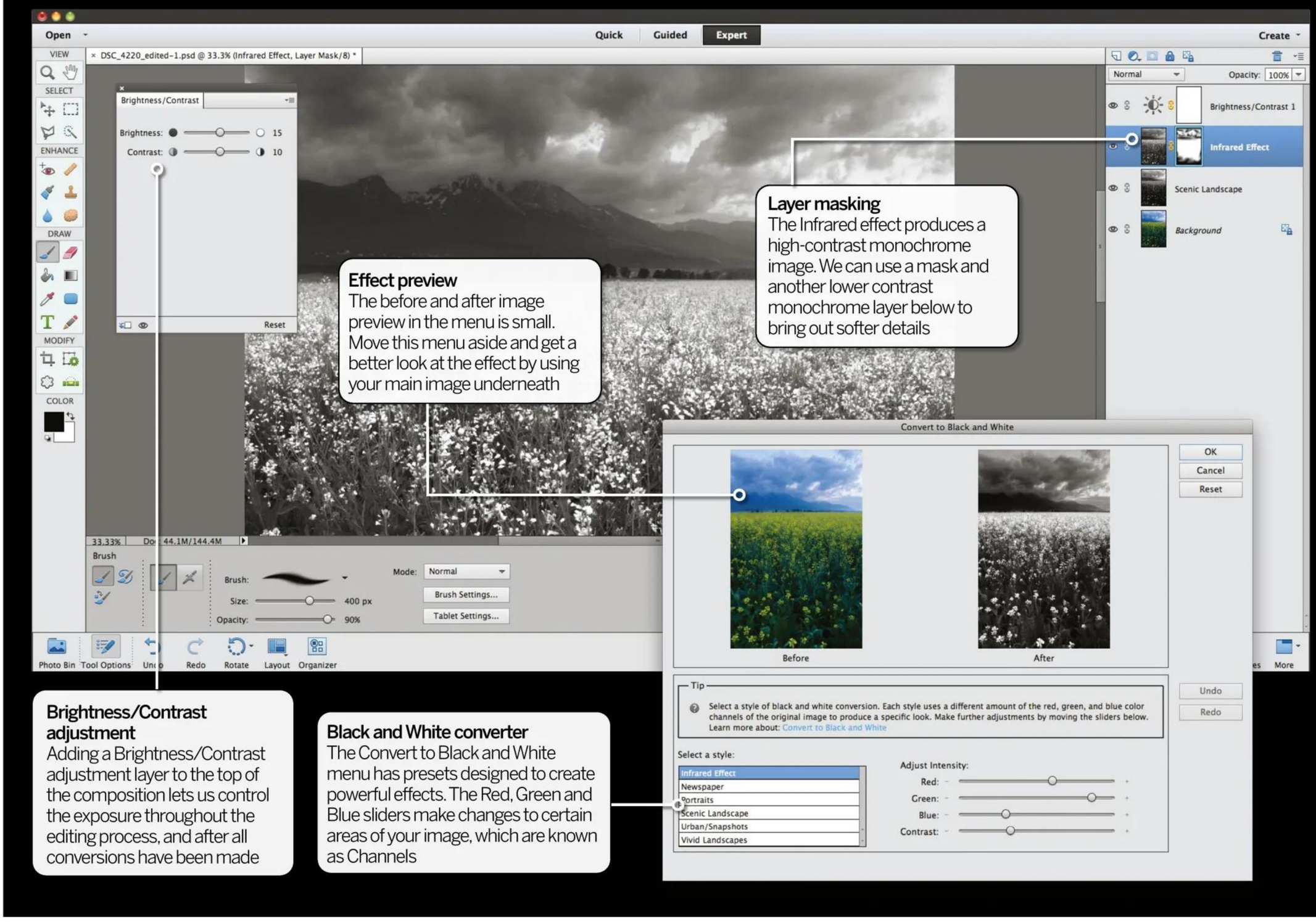


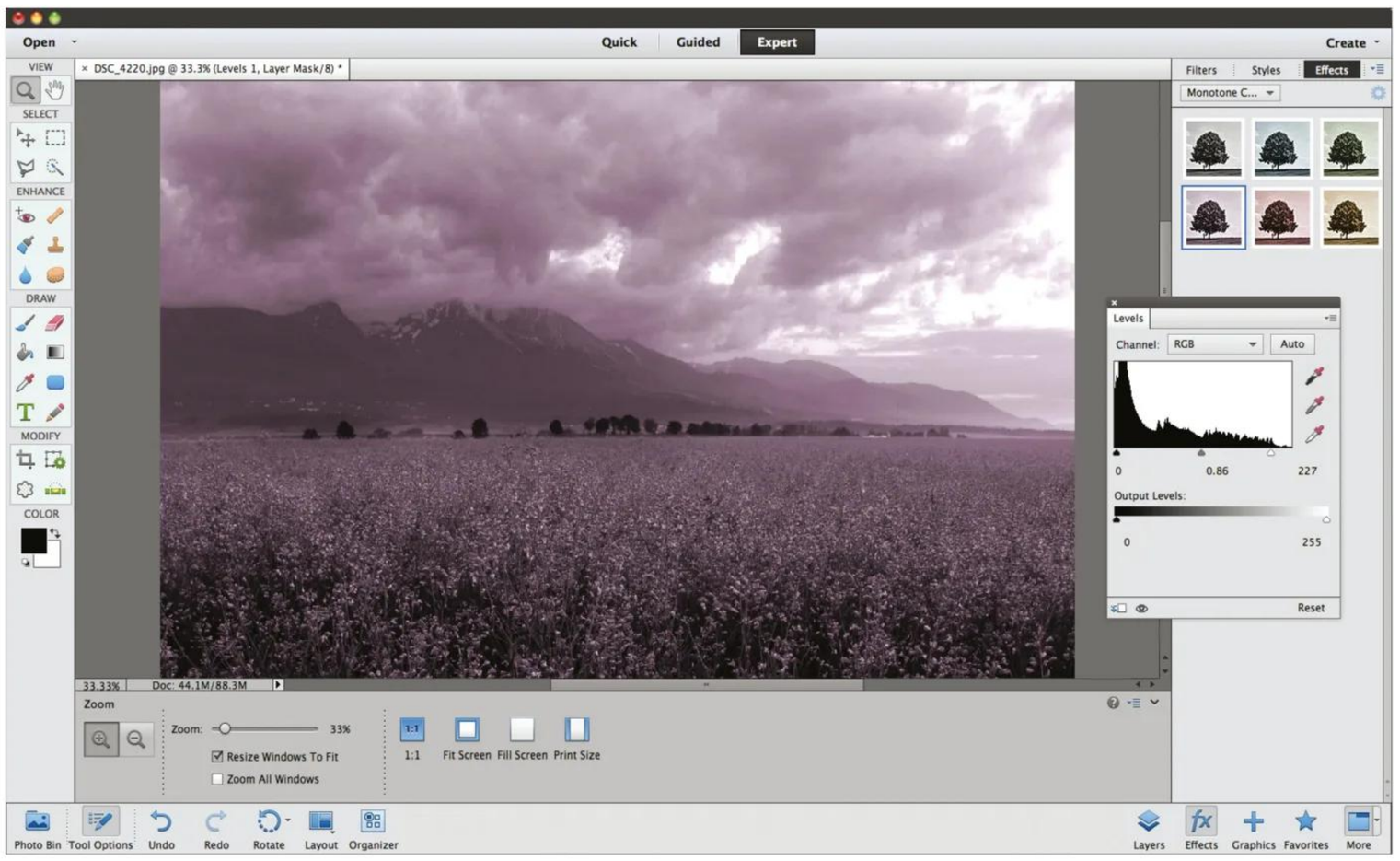

**12** **Brush work** Select the Brush tool (B) and change its Size to a soft 400px, with Opacity set to 90%. Paint over the clouds to reveal the contrast from the Scenic Landscape layer beneath. Brush over the highlights of the clouds to bring out the lighter areas.

"Another way to experiment with different styles is to open up the Effects panel in Expert mode"

# **Closer look** Layers, masks, and adjustments

A closer look at what went into this effect


Open
Quick
Guided
Expert
Create
DSC_4220_edited-1.psd @ 33.3% (Infrared Effect, Layer Mask/8) *
Brightness/Contrast
Brightness: 15
Contrast: 10
Reset
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Brightness/Contrast 1
Infrared Effect
Scenic Landscape
Background
Effect preview
The before and after image preview in the menu is small. Move this menu aside and get a better look at the effect by using your main image underneath
Layer masking
The Infrared effect produces a high-contrast monochrome image. We can use a mask and another lower contrast monochrome layer below to bring out softer details
Brush
Brush:
Size: 400 px
Opacity: 90%
Mode: Normal
Brush Settings...
Tablet Settings...
Photo Bin
Tool Options
Undo
Redo
Rotate
Layout
Organizer
More
Convert to Black and White
OK
Cancel
Reset
Before
After
Tip
Select a style of black and white conversion. Each style uses a different amount of the red, green, and blue color channels of the original image to produce a specific look. Make further adjustments by moving the sliders below.
Learn more about: Convert to Black and White
Undo
Redo
Select a style:
Infrared Effect
Newspaper
Portraits
Scenic Landscape
Urban/Snapshots
Vivid Landscapes
Adjust Intensity:
Red:
Green:
Blue:
Contrast:
Brightness/Contrast adjustment
Adding a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer to the top of the composition lets us control the exposure throughout the editing process, and after all conversions have been made
Black and White converter
The Convert to Black and White menu has presets designed to create powerful effects. The Red, Green and Blue sliders make changes to certain areas of your image, which are known as Channels




# Tinted effects

## Go for a duotone or tritone look instead

As with most effects, there's always more than one way to go about achieving it. Monochrome is no exception to this, and another way to experiment with different styles is to open up the Effects panel when in Expert mode. Click on the Effects tab (for version 11 only) and then filter the available options by Monotone Colour. A number of monochrome effects will then open up, ranging from a standard black and white effect to colour based ones such as sepia, red and purple. These effects don't adjust the lighting in your image, though, so it's a good idea to use the Levels adjustment layer (found under the Layer menu) to boost the midtones if you find that they are lacking in contrast. Sometimes, an extra tone or two can add a nice edge.

Before

# Use Dodge & Burn to enhance portraits

## Working with both the Dodge and Burn tools, use shadowing and highlights to improve this portrait

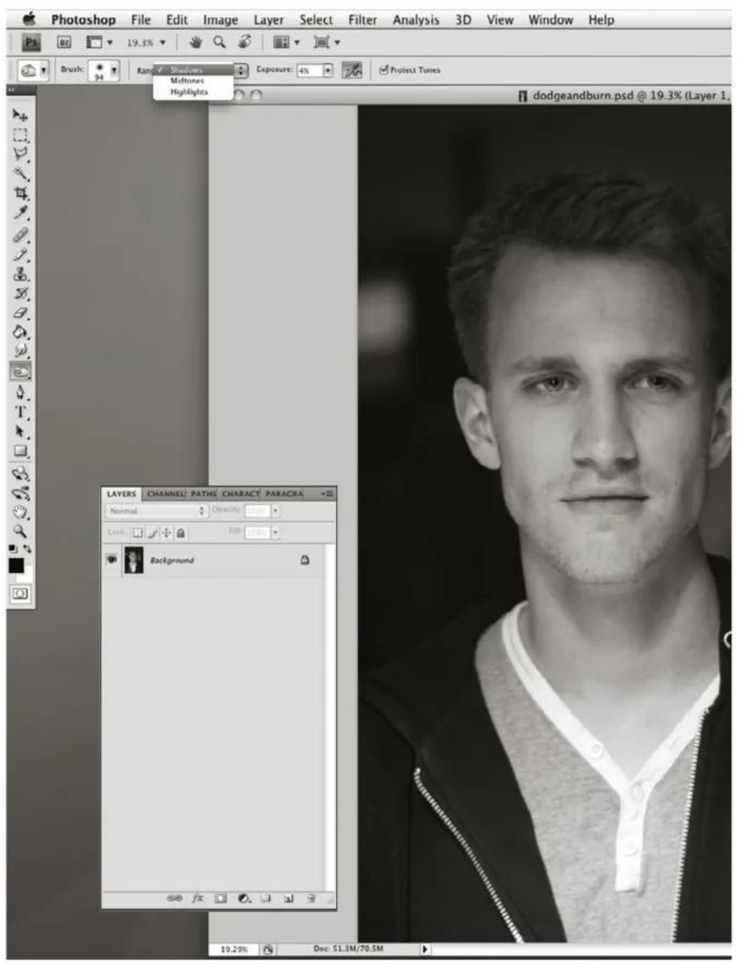
**Whether you like it or not, photographic manipulation exists.** Both the arguments for and against it have grown along with the enhancements in traditional photography and the manipulation of those images. Once you're trained in the Dodge and Burn tools you can make your own moral decisions to use your powers for good or for evil.

The Dodge tool and the Burn tool (try to keep them separate in your mind) are your best bets for enhancing an image, drawing the viewer's eyes' attention to a certain area or just to help bring out the shadows and highlights of a photograph. Much like working with Levels or Curves you are basically lightening or darkening the image; however, the freedom that both Dodge and Burn give you is in that you choose what pixels to work on. This enables you to paint in your shadows and compose your highlights very selectively.

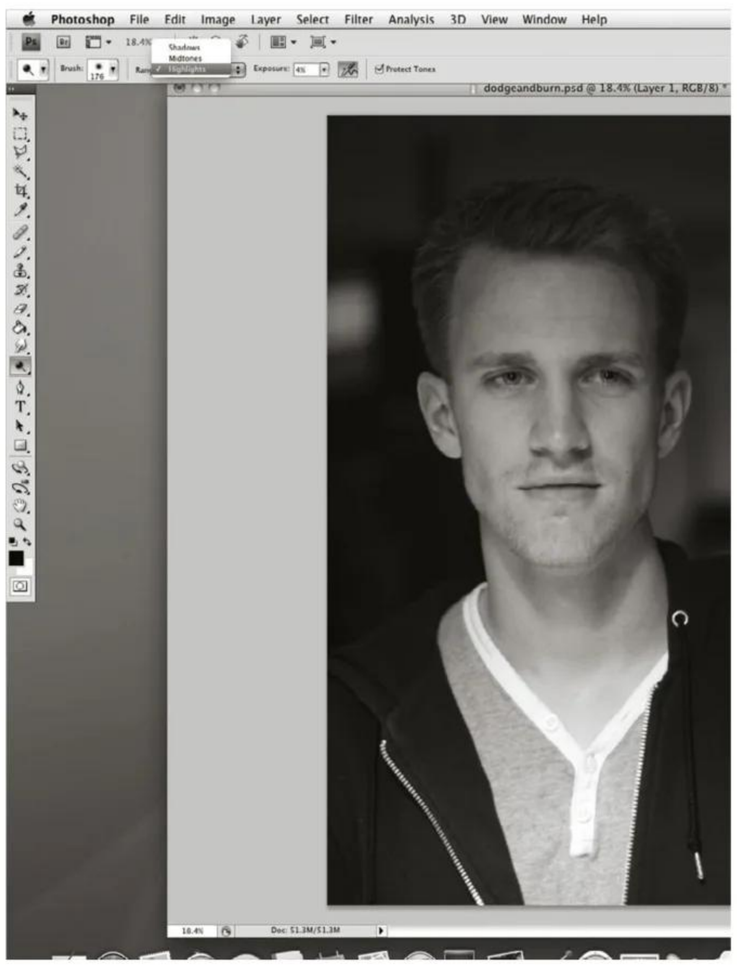
If you look at our 'Before' photograph, you can see the direction of the light is casting some uneven and somewhat distracting shadows on the face. Also, most of the highlighting is occurring around the centre of the face and the lower neck. We're going to use the Dodge and Burn tools to help define these shadows and highlights. To start with, we will work with the Dodge tool, exploring how we can use it to take away from the general imperfections of the human skin and help our subject to glow. In this tutorial we will use a workflow that allows nondestructive editing of the photograph by using a transparent overlay.

> "The Dodge and Burn tools enable you to paint in your shadows and compose your highlights"

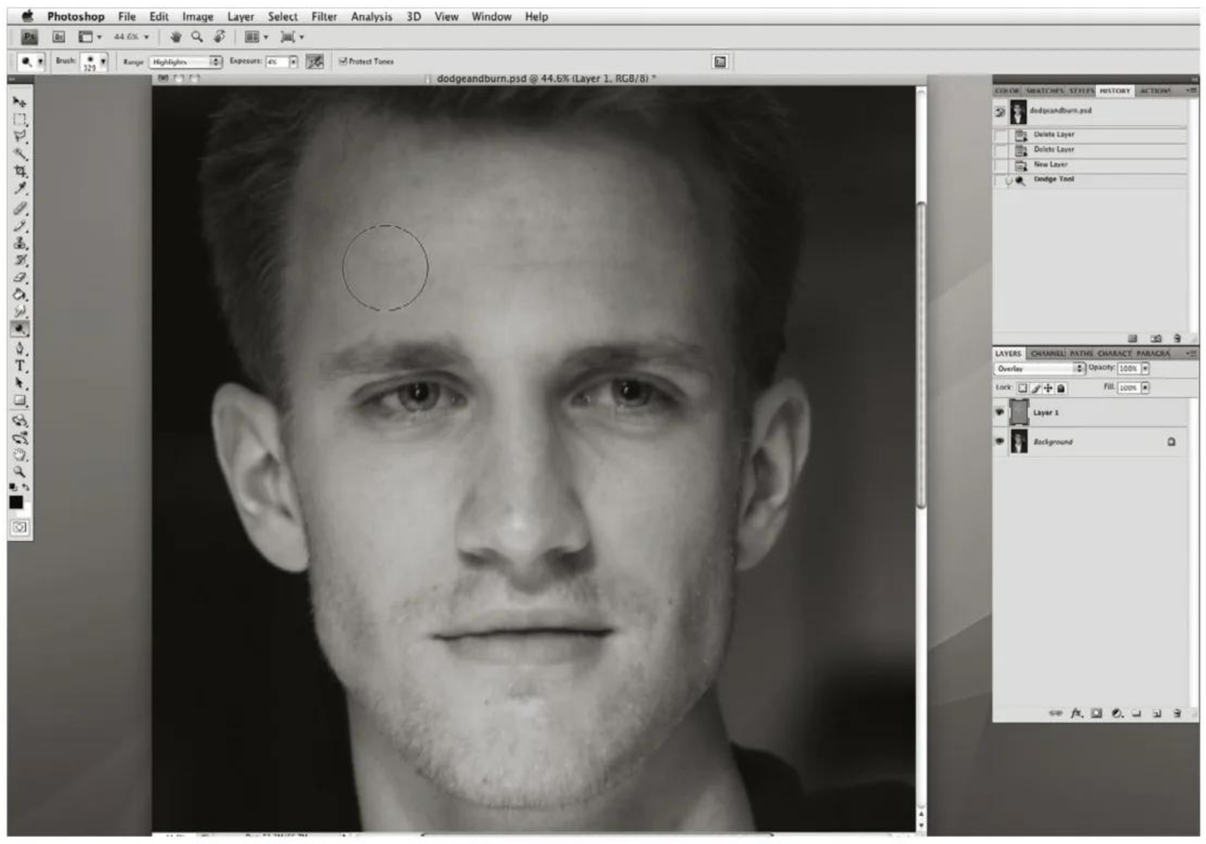
## Guide to the Dodge tool




**01 Setting up** Hold Alt and click on 'Create a new layer'; this will open up some adjustable options. Select 'Overlay' on the mode option and tick 'Fill with overlay-neutral colour (50% gray)', creating a nondestructive workflow to edit the photograph.

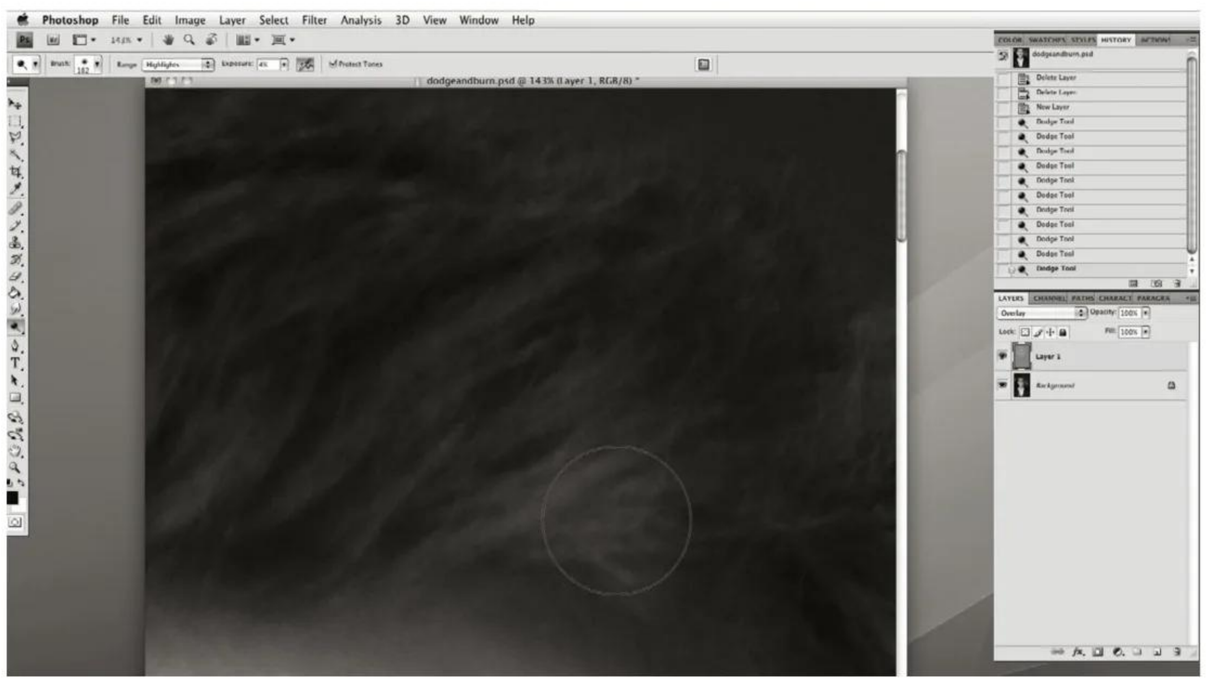



**02 Choose your brush** Select the Dodge tool and choose Highlights, which tells the tool what areas to work on. Also, bring your exposure down to between 3-5%. Select 'Enable airbrush mode'. All these options will help create a subtle but effective look.




**03** **Skin** Hold down the left mouse button, identify the lighter parts of the skin and start going over them with the brush. Be careful not to overexpose the areas. Avoid a patchy effect by evenly dodging all areas.

**04** **Selective areas** Ring your brush size down, zoom in and look for specific highlight/midtone areas that need lightening (eyes, lips, nostrils, light hair). Zoom out to review your progress, making sure the changes are subtle.

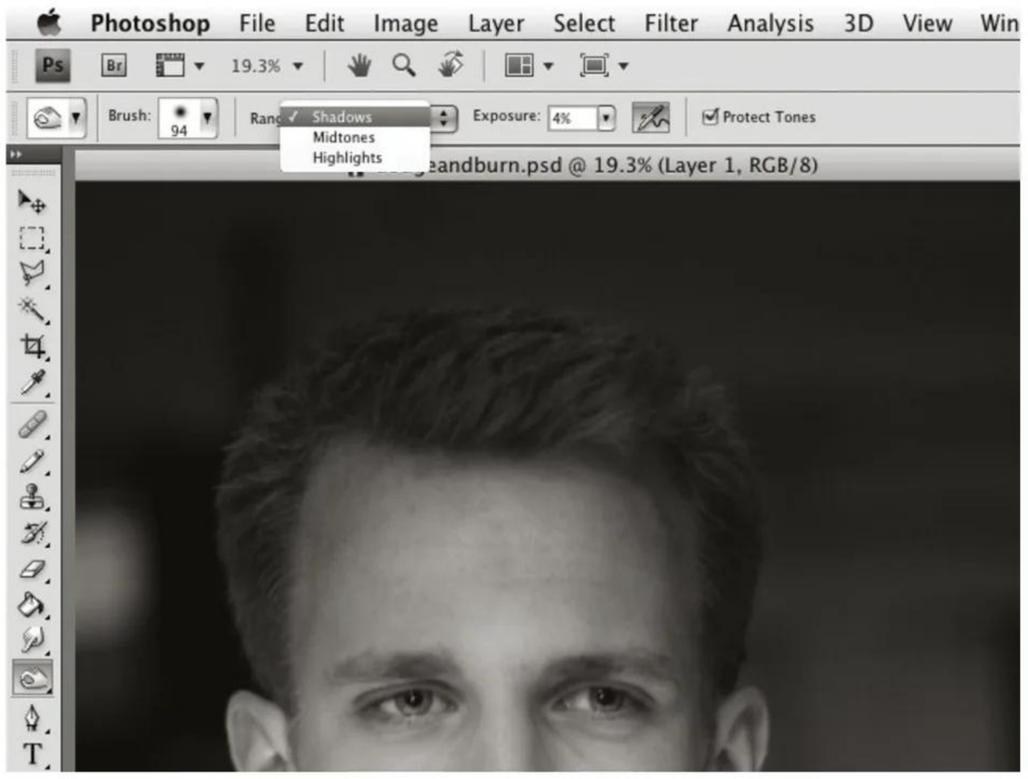



**05** **Hair** Work the Dodge tool over light areas of the hair. Zoom out and review the changes by hiding the grey overlay to reveal your original image. Also notice how imperfections of the skin are lessened. Compare the two.

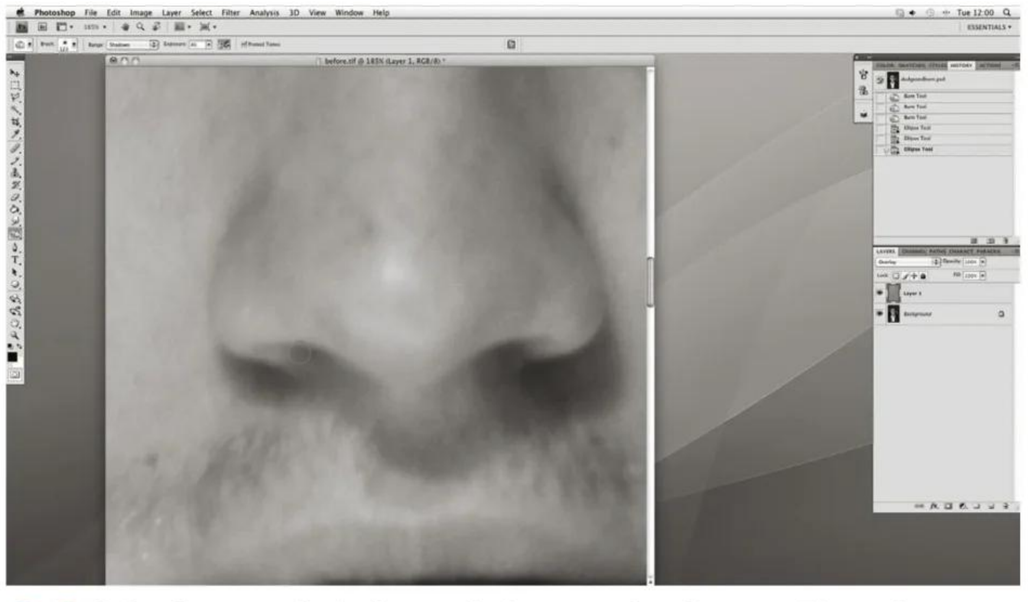



**02** **Shadows** Work the skin areas as before, but think about how you want your shadows to cast. Bring out the shadows on the right-hand side of the face to begin bringing in a dynamic tone to the photograph.

## Guide to the Burn tool

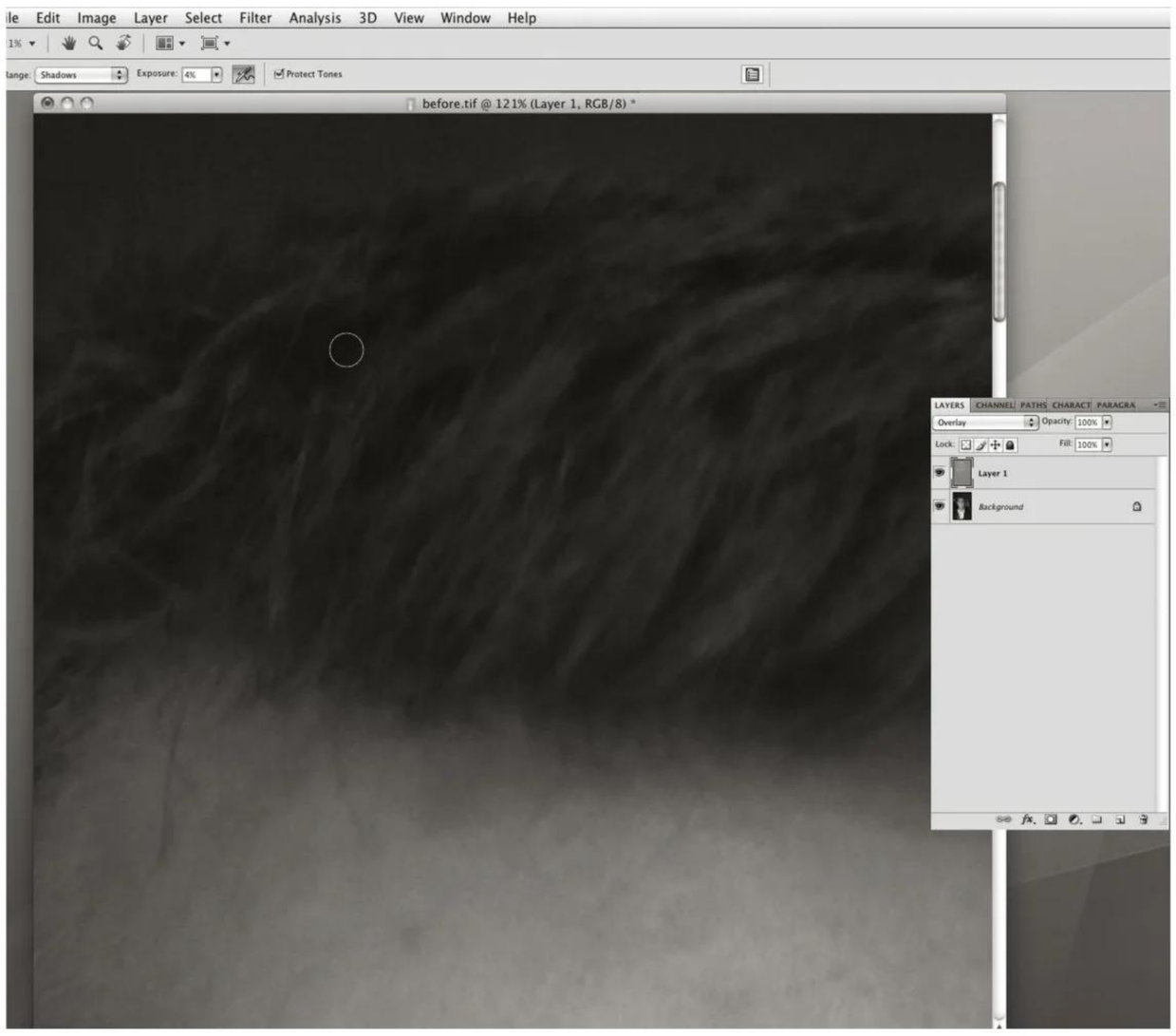



**01** **Selecting your brush** Now we've used the Dodge tool, our subject looks a little too bright. So select the Burn tool and mimic the same options as with the Dodge tool, but this time select Shadows instead of Highlights.

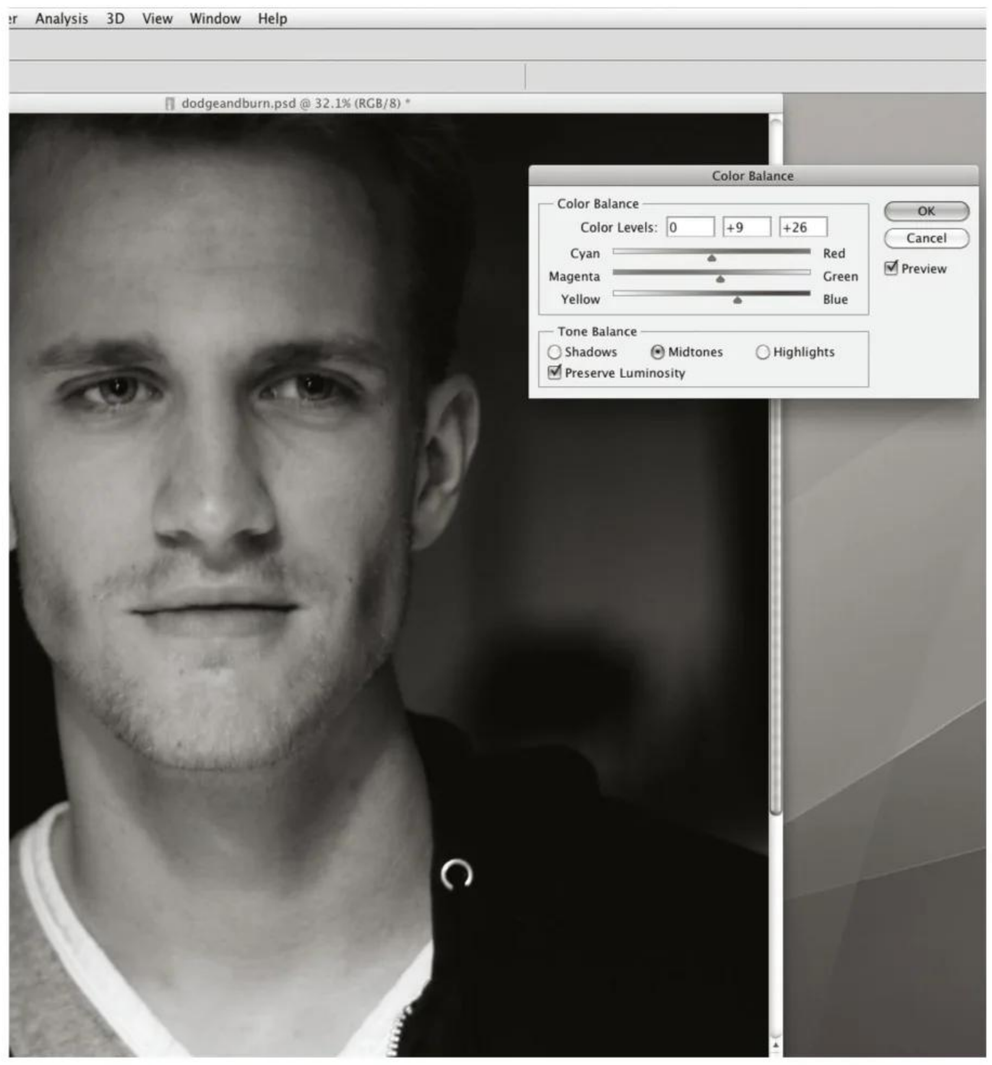


**03** **Selective areas** Go in close to the image to alter the areas. The easiest way to do this is to use the magnify tool or navigator bar. Keep coming in and out of the image to check it looks natural.

# Use Dodge & Burn to enhance portraits




**04** **Hair** Work the darker patches of hair to bring them out against the highlighted areas. Our model has light and dark patches in his hair, so by the time you're done the hair should really stand out.




**05** **Final touches** Finally, merge all layers and adjust your colour balance to get rid of any imbalance in colour after using the dodge and burn effect. The more you desaturate the image, the more the effect will work.

## "Once you're trained in the Dodge and Burn tools you can make your own decisions"

### Landscapes

In this landscape example, the shadows and highlights have been enhanced using the Dodge and Burn tools. The clouds in this photograph have lots of variation in terms of density and how much light they're letting through. Be meticulous about where you add the dodge effect so as not to completely bleach out the texture of the lighter clouds.

Before

# Create a black & white HDR in Photoshop

## Learn how to create high dynamic range results in easy to follow steps

**High Dynamic Range Imaging (HDRI) utilises methods to help increase the tonal range recorded in a digital image, from the darkest blacks to the brightest whites.** Standard digital cameras struggle to record extreme dark and light tones in a single exposure. A common method to increase tonal range is to shoot multiple shots of the same subject at different exposure times. These shots are then blended together into an HDR image that has a higher bit depth (tonal range). This image is often then "tonemapped" down to a viewable Low Dynamic Range (LDR) for everyday monitors such as LCD or CRT screens.

Due to registration issues when combining multiple shots together, HDR is only effective when shooting static subjects such as landscapes, interiors and architecture. HDR in moving subjects will show ghosted edges as positions change between exposures: faux HDR techniques are better for this, for example shooting in RAW format and then pushing and pulling the exposure of a single frame and layering adjusted frames one above the other in Photoshop and using masks to hide and reveal certain areas.

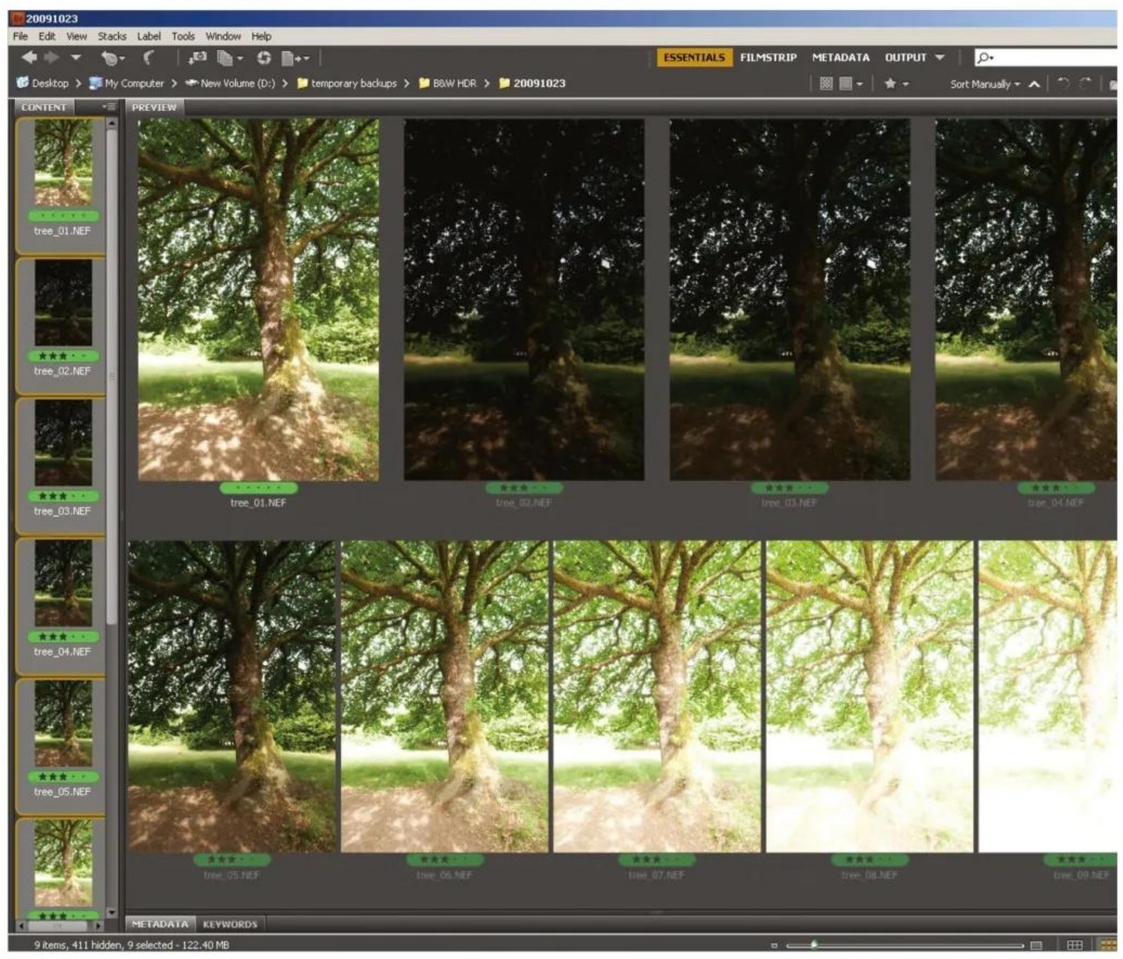
We've chosen to photograph this Oak tree in bright sunlight to illustrate how HDR can help bring out detail in the shadows and highlights.

We will cover a standard technique to shoot for HDR and then quickly look at the HDR Pro in Photoshop CS5. This will merge our multiple exposures seamlessly into one. We will then take a 16-bit TIF file into Camera Raw to make some more adjustments and then convert to black and white, bringing out some of the rich detail within the image. The final infrared look shows how far you can push and pull images like these to create incredibly dramatic black and white imagery.

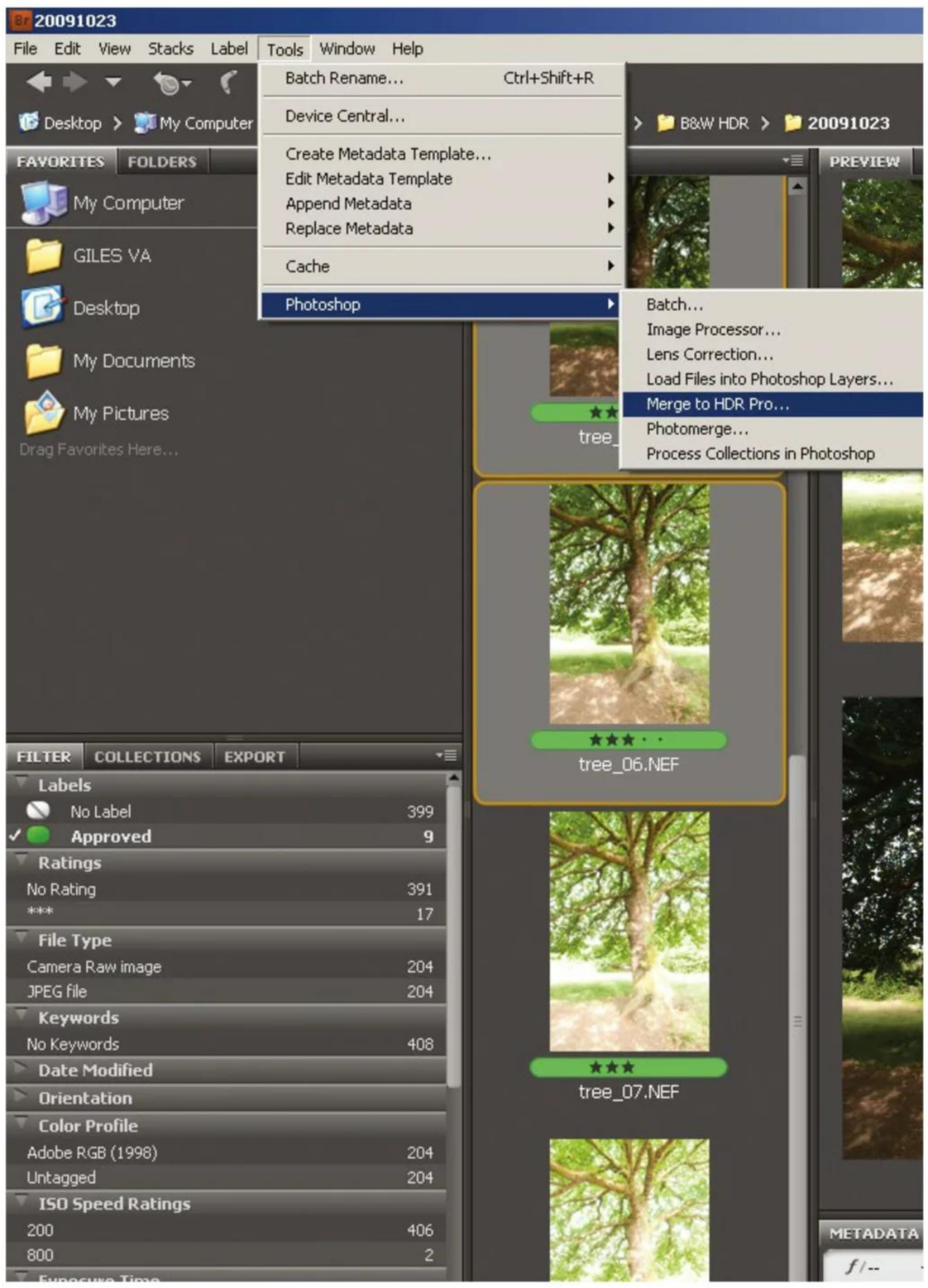
**01 Shooting checklist** If you're shooting for HDR from scratch you will need two key pieces of equipment: a camera with manual override options and a tripod with camera head. Optional equipment includes: lens hood, grey card, spirit level and cable release.

"HDR is only effective when shooting static subjects such as landscapes, interiors and architecture"

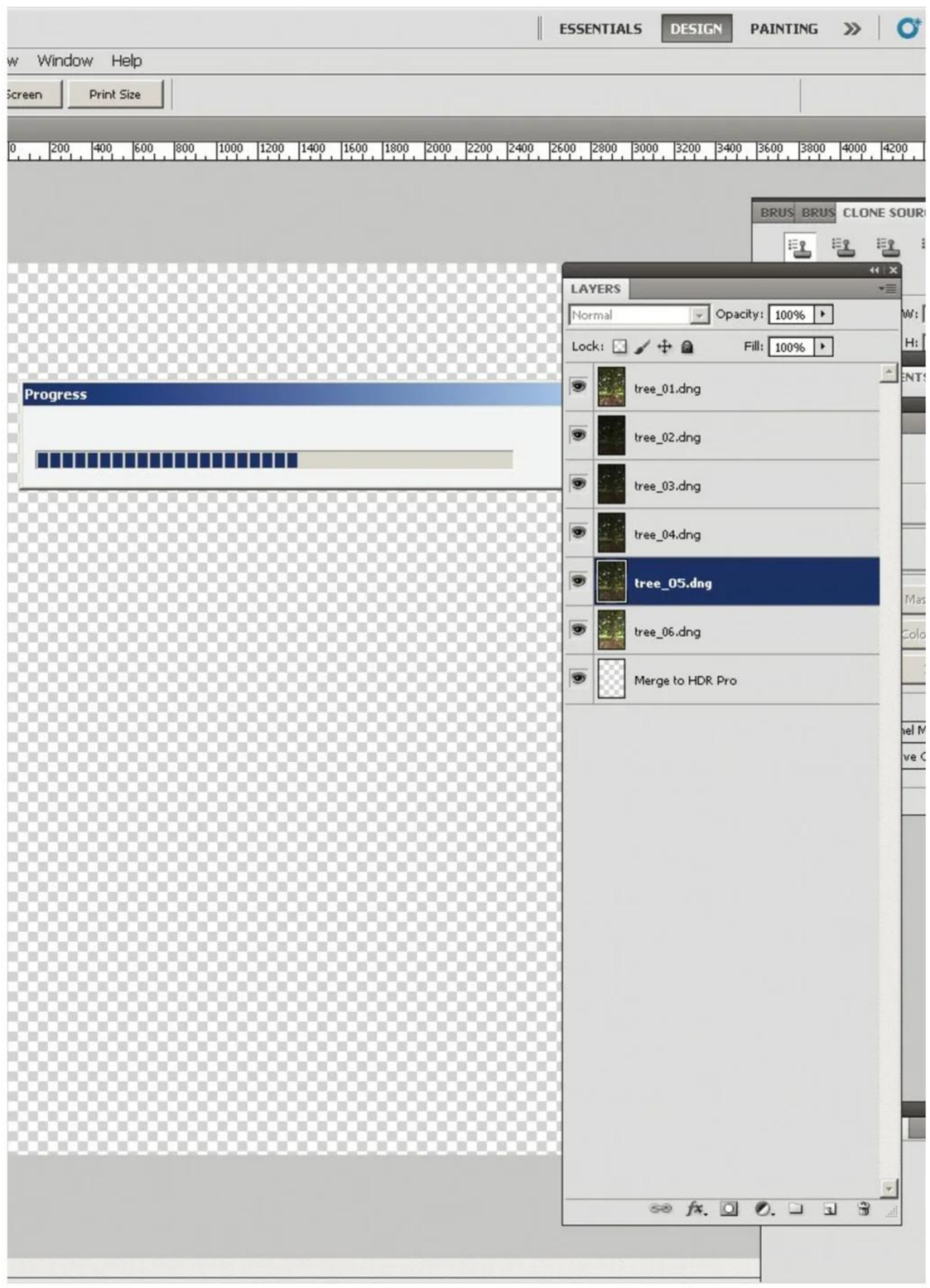
**02 Setting up your shots** Set camera to manual focus and aperture or Aperture priority. Compose your shot and meter an average tone. Shoot bracketed exposures by adjusting your shutter speed either side of the average exposure.



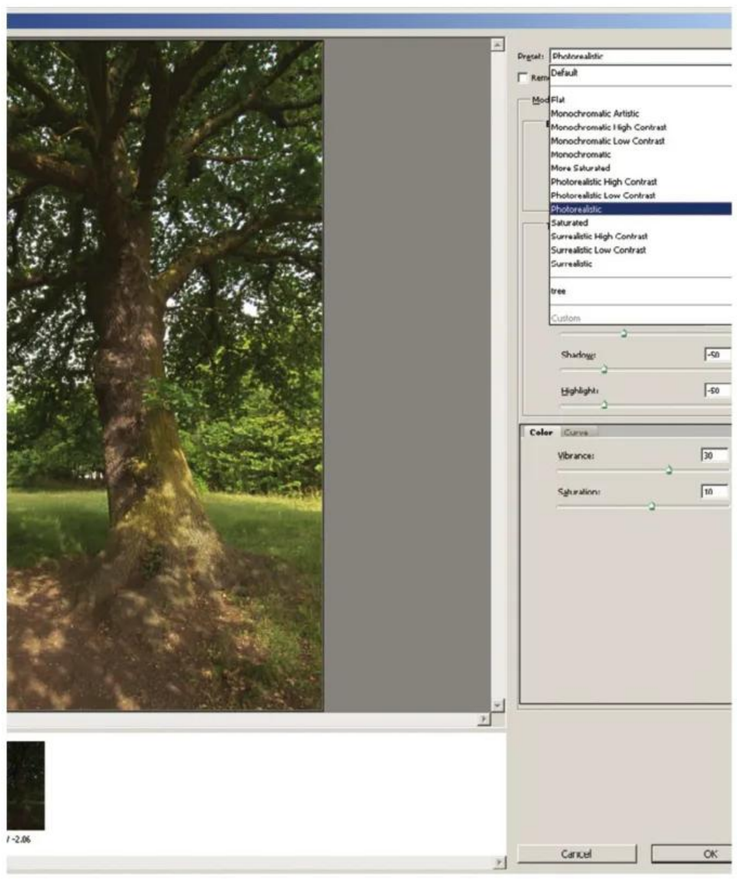

**03 How many shots?** Typically shoot between five and nine exposures and bracket between one and two stops for each exposure. Even if you don't blend them all, it's better to have all the tonal range in case you want to blend other exposures back in later.



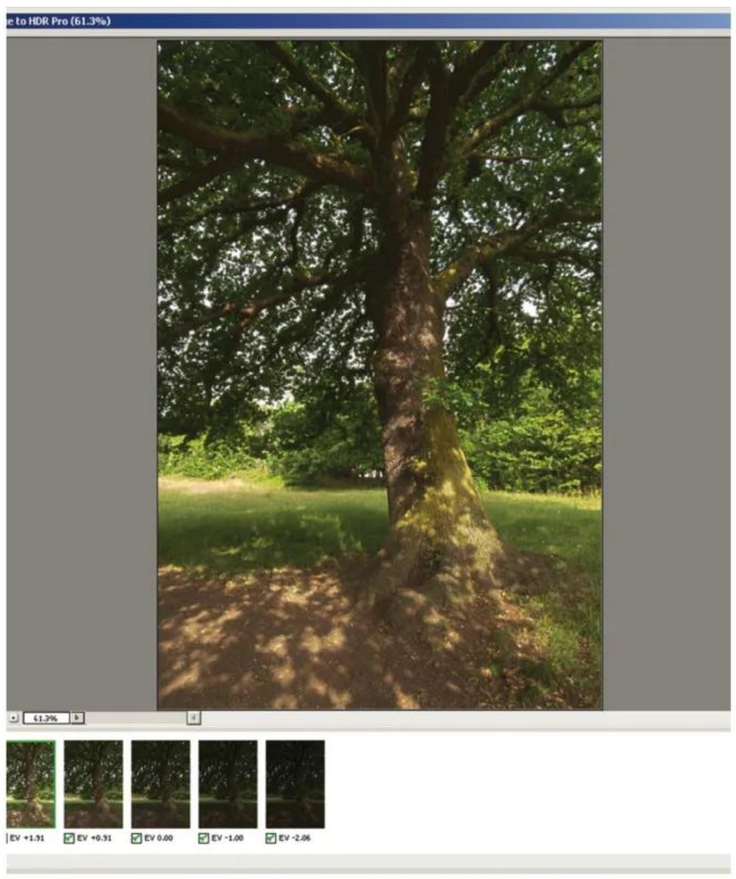

**04** **Bring them into Photoshop** Open up your bracketed shots. Use RAW (best quality) or JPEG. Select the images to blend together. We've selected six from the nine shots, ignoring the brightest ones. Choose Tools>Photoshop>Merge to HDR Pro.



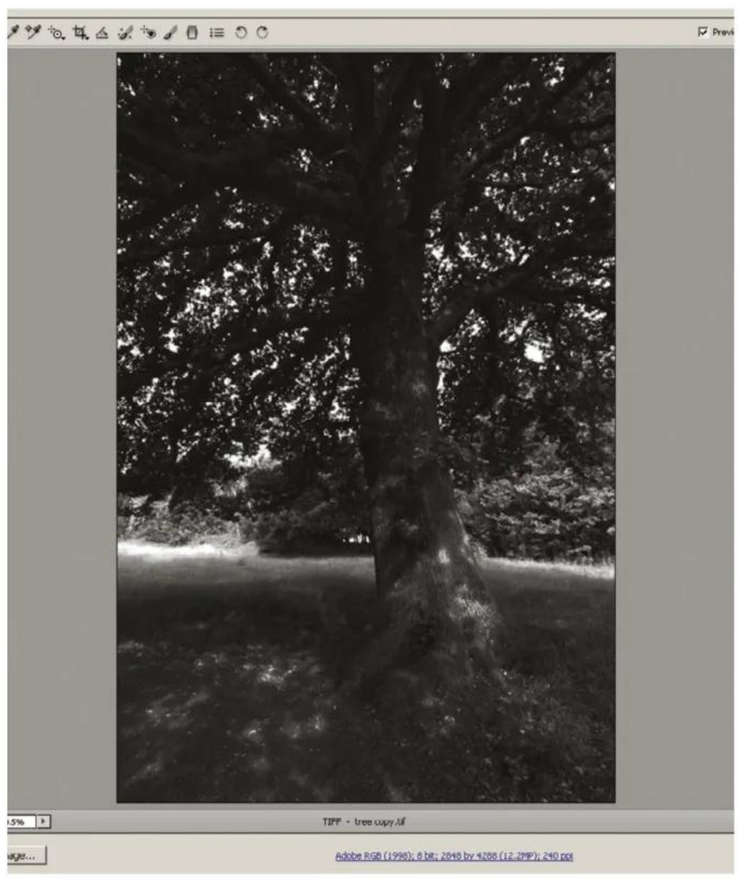

**05** **HDR Pro dialog box** Take a break while the images are loading, this takes time. Once loaded, you'll see the individual thumbnails at the bottom and a merged preview in the middle. Familiarise yourself with the sliders and presets on the right.




**06** **Custom presets** All the presets are quite subjective, you'll either like them or not. For this tutorial we're going to work with the Photorealistic preset. Select this setting from the drop-down menu.

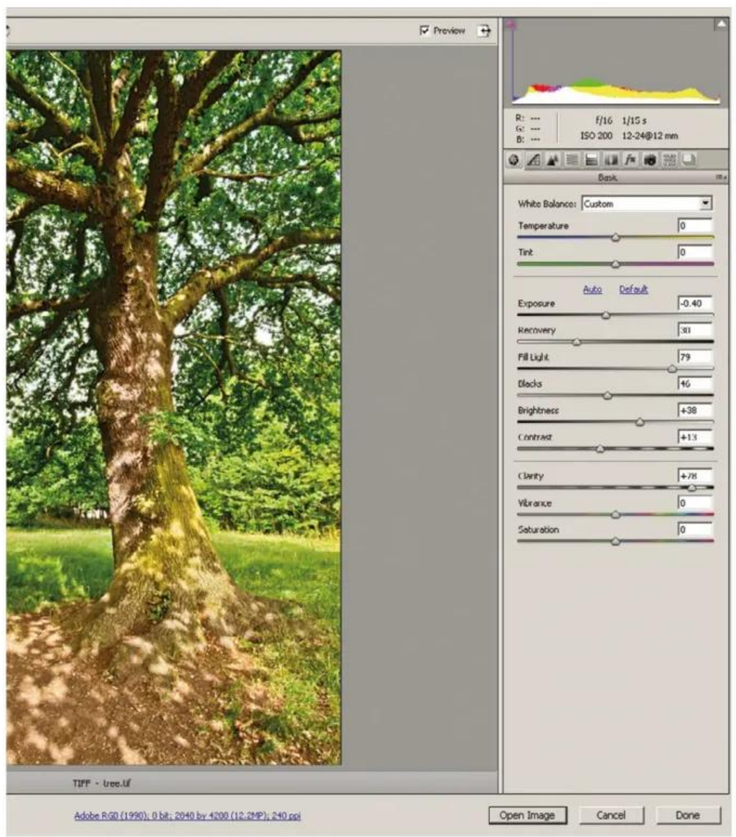



**07** **Remove Ghosts** Check this is on to help remove ghosting in your image. In this case some leaves may have moved slightly in the wind. You can also apply this to individual frames by selecting them first at the bottom.

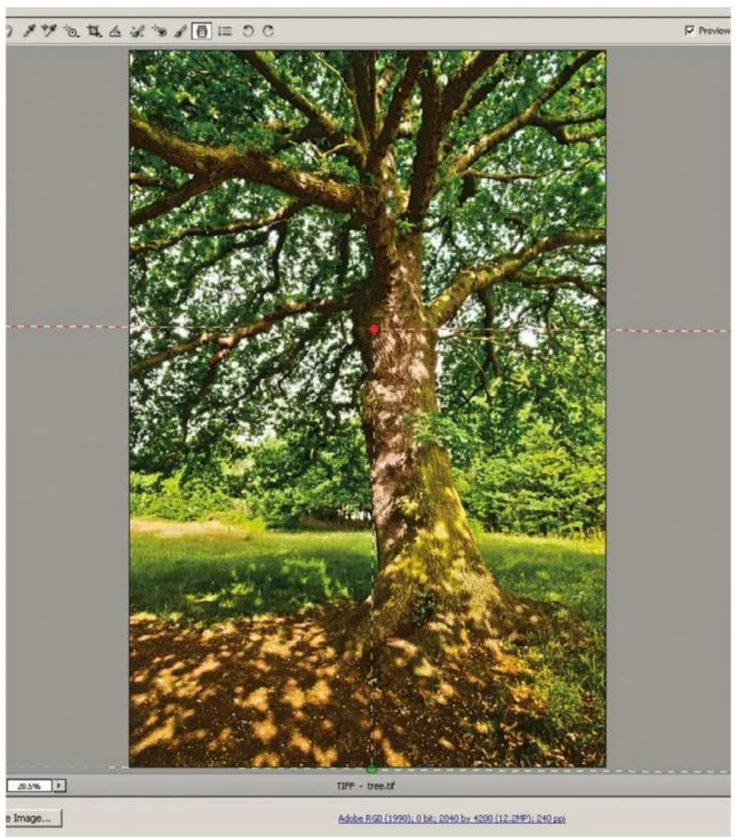



**08** **Outputting file** Select 16bit mode and then click OK to process. Save the file as tree.tif file and then in Bridge select the file and press Ctrl/Cmd+R to open it up in the Adobe Camera Raw interface for adjustment.

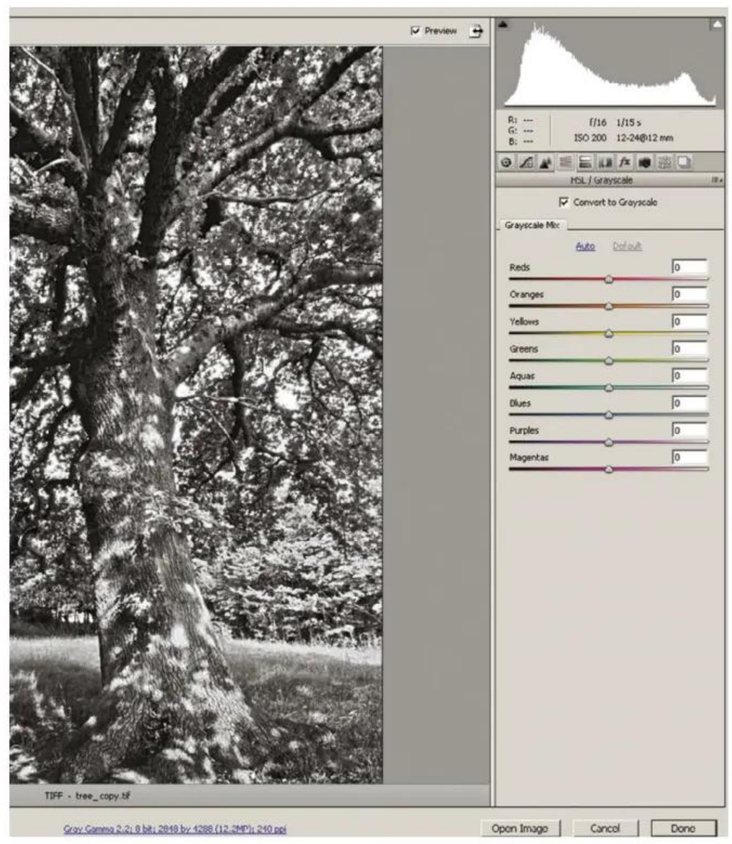
# Create a black & white HDR in Photoshop



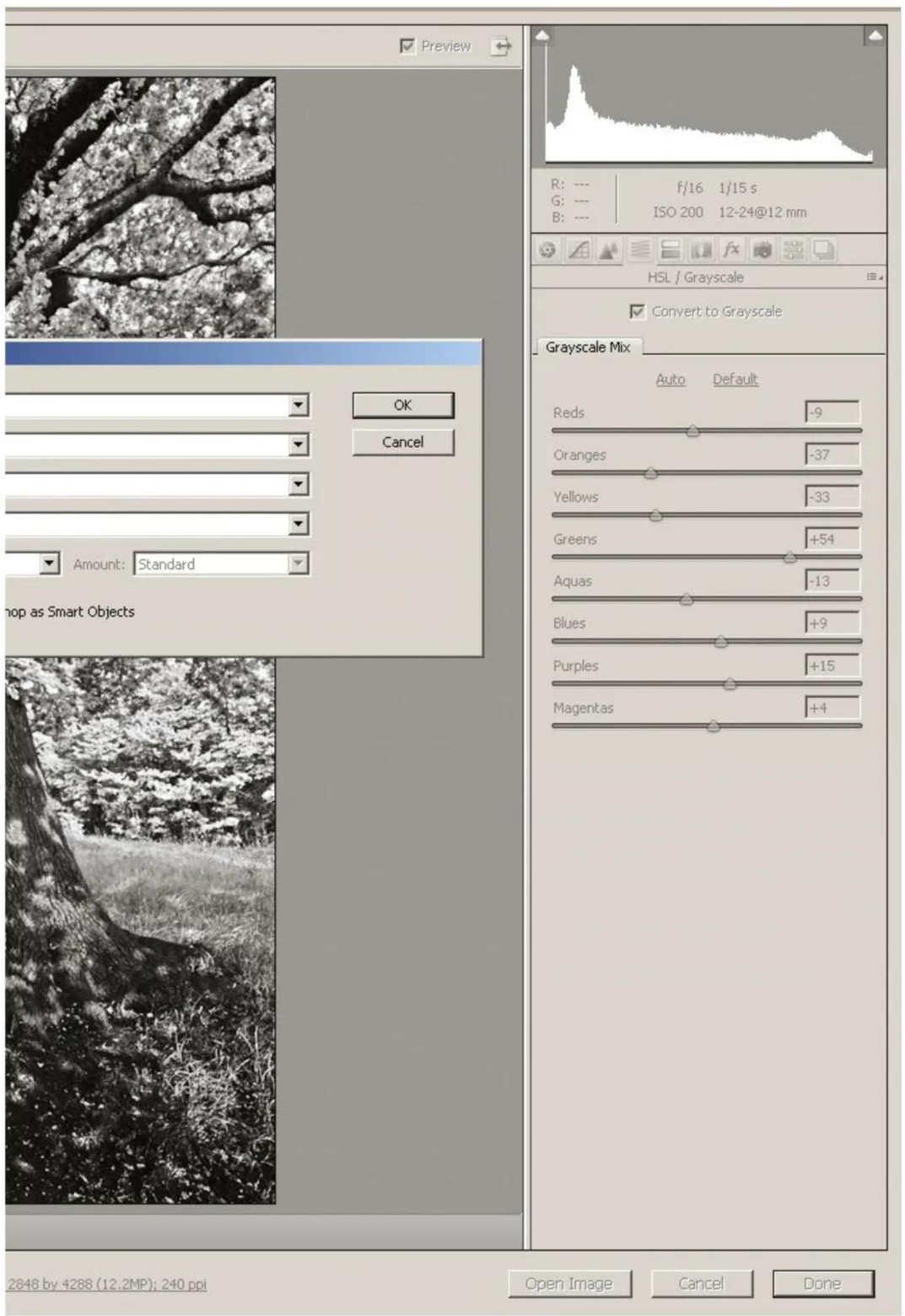

**09** **Camera Raw adjustments** In Bridge apply these settings to bring out detail in the bark and give it an infrared feel. Exposure: -0.40, Recovery: 30, Fill Light: 79, Blacks: 46, Brightness: 38, Contrast: 13, Clarity: 78.



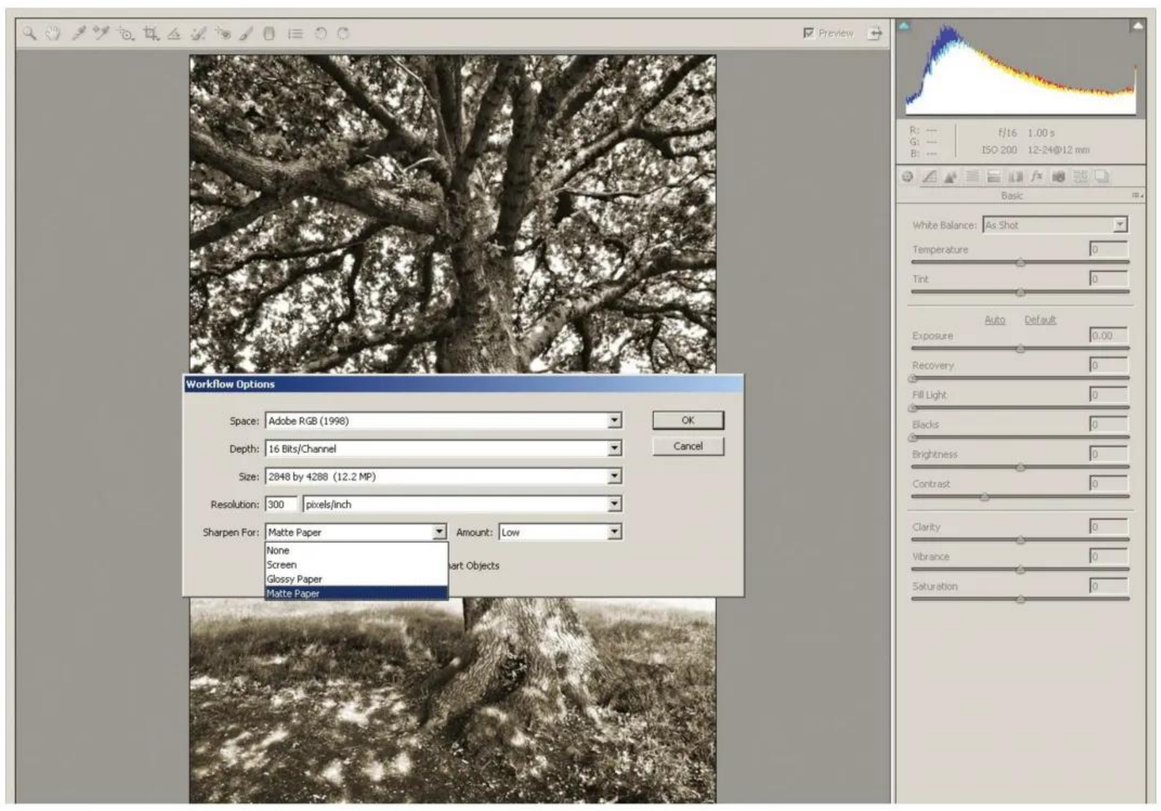

**10** **Adding a grad filter** Press G to select graduated filter, and hold down Shift and draw a line from the bottom upwards. Enter these values: Exposure: -0.70, Brightness: -11, Contrast: +85, Saturation: +20, Clarity: +43.




**11** **Black and white conversion** Click on the hand icon at the top to take you back to the main menu options. Now click on the HSL/Grayscale tab on the right (the icon that looks like slider lines) Check Convert to Grayscale.



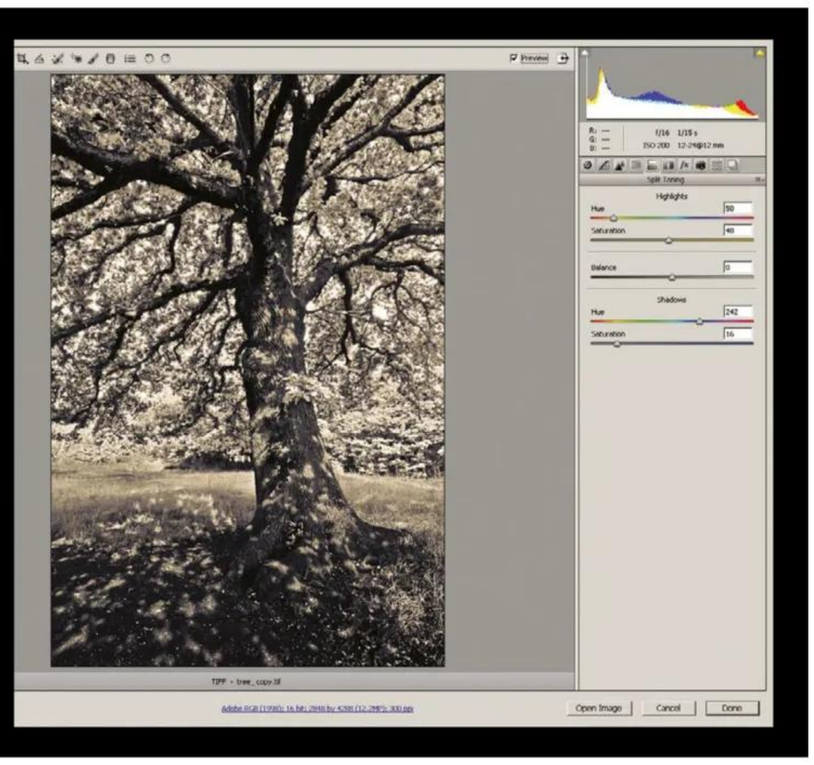

**12** **Black and white adjustment** Now we have a basic black and white conversion we can tweak sliders to create the high contrast infrared feel. To achieve this look, start by inputting the following; Reds: -9, Oranges: -37, Yellows: -33, Greens: +54, Aquas: -13, Blues: +9, Purples: +15, Magentas: +4.

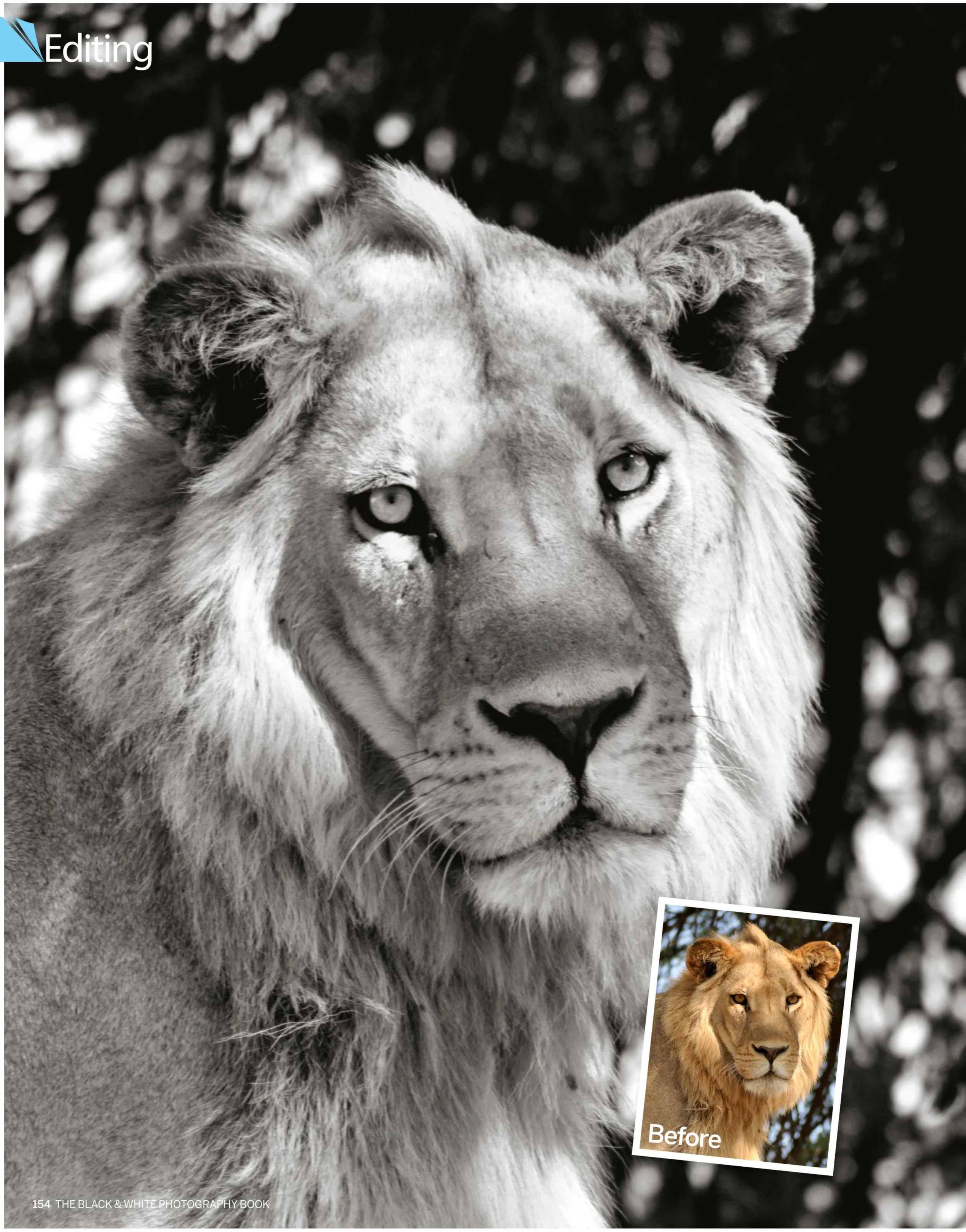



**13** **Sharpening to finish** Click on the output settings (text link at the base of the image) You can output to a colour or greyscale profile and 16 or 8bit. Finish by a small amount of sharpening either in Camera Raw or Photoshop.

## Lith effect

You can take your black and white images further and experiment with a number of different tinting techniques. Here we have used split toning in Camera Raw and warmed up the midtones with some reddish brown and cooled down the shadows with a blue/black. This resembles the darkroom technique of Lith printing where you would over-expose the paper to light and then develop it in Lith developer that is partially oxidised.




Before

# Master tone edits

We show all levels of Photoshop users how to work with tone for masterful monochrome

**Black and white effects have always been popular with photographers.** Monochrome images can be created in a host of ways using the power of Photoshop, and it's up to the user to establish which works best for them. Here we'll show you just some of the many ways to approach your black and white digital images, as well as the means to make them that little bit more exciting with additional effects. We'll look at three core techniques in total.

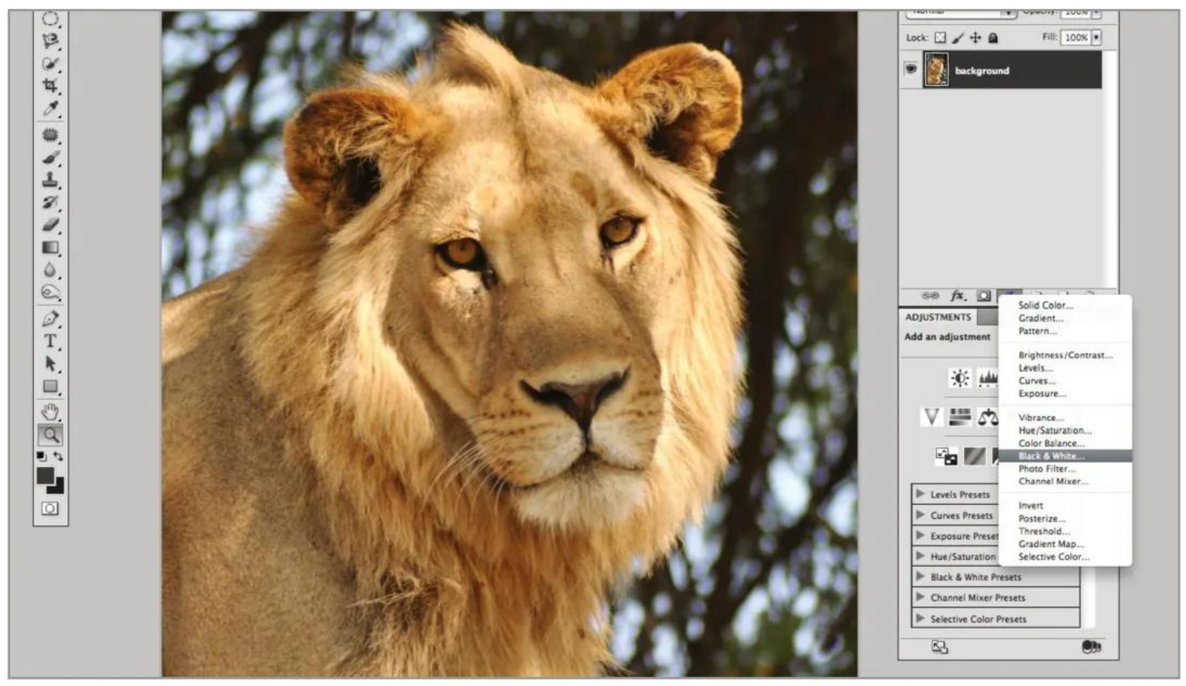
What you must always remember is that just because no colour shows does not mean it can't enhance your images. Black and white often calls attention to the colour that is not there and layers and colour adjustments can help with this.

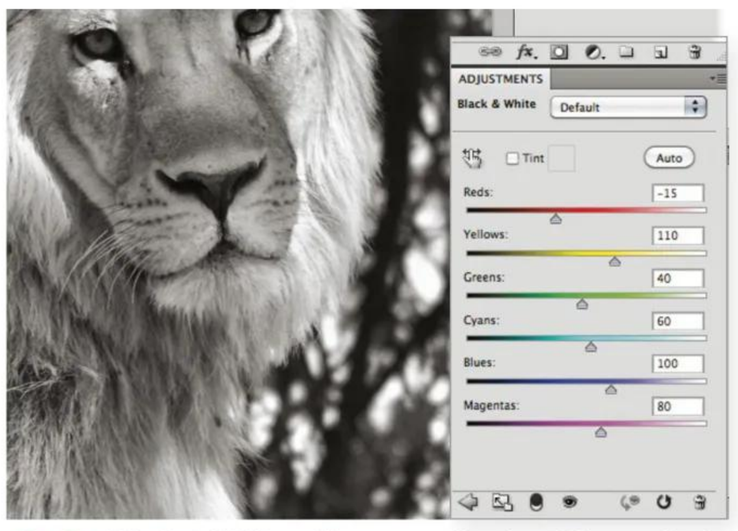
Duotone effects are also addressed, as these can be the best method when creating for print. Most printers can't reproduce the tonal range of a digital black and white image, so we show you how to take out the guesswork when applying this style.

## Method one Adjustment layers

Create your black and white image with non-destructive edits

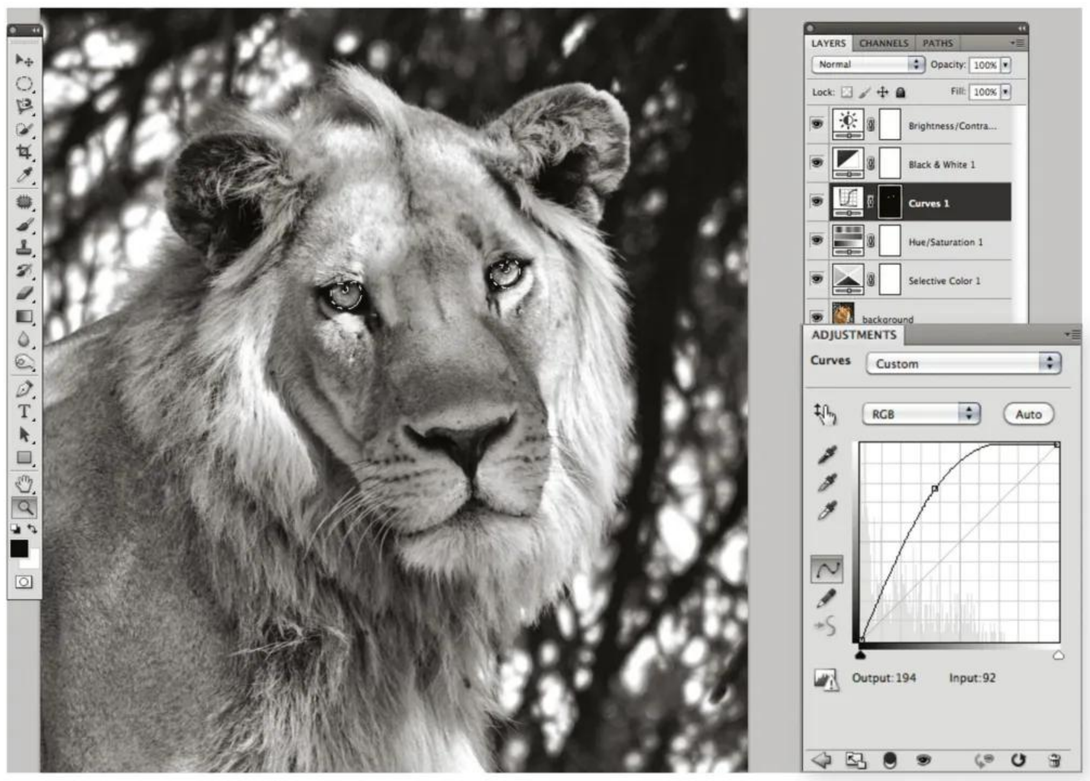
**01 Non-destructive effects** Some edits can change your image irreversibly. If you want to work with an editable effect instead, we recommend using adjustment layers. These make sure you can keep editing your image while rendering your changes less final (ideal if you identify yourself as a bit of a control freak). You can start by going to Image, and continue to Adjustments> Black & White.




**02 Black & White adjustment** Set the sliders to: Reds -15, Yellows 110, Greens 40, Cyans 60, Blues 100, Magentas 80. You should tweak these settings depending on your own image, though, to get the best spread of shadows and highlights.

**03 Selective Colour adjustment** Now, beneath the Black & White layer, apply Selective Colour. Set Reds Magenta to +10% and Yellow to +15%. Yellows Magenta is set to +10, Blues Cyan to +100% and Black to -25%. Apply a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer on top and increase the Saturation to +30 for a boost.



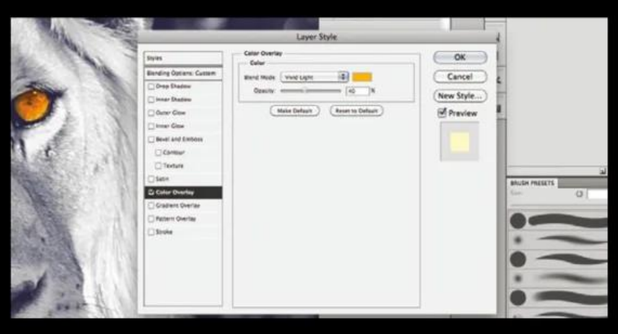

**04 Brightness / Contrast** The previous settings will have dulled the subject's eyes. Select his pupils with the Elliptical Marquee tool, apply a Curves adjustment layer to the selection, then tweak the highlights. After that, apply a final Brightness/ Contrast adjustment on top of everything you've got so far to finish it off.

## Add colour back in

We show you how to colourise your black and white images

**Layer mask**
To achieve this effect you should have all your layers live so you can apply more adjustments. All you will need to do now is activate the Black & White adjustment's layer mask.

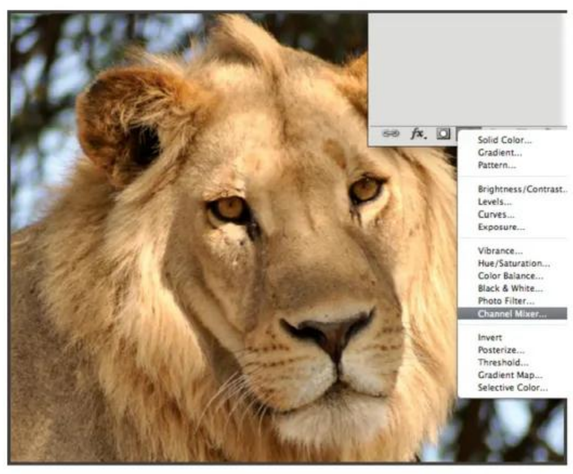
**Gradual colour**
Now paint back in eye colour gradually with a 70% black brush. If you are working with a flat black and white layer, pick similar eye tones and paint these to a selection on a new layer instead.



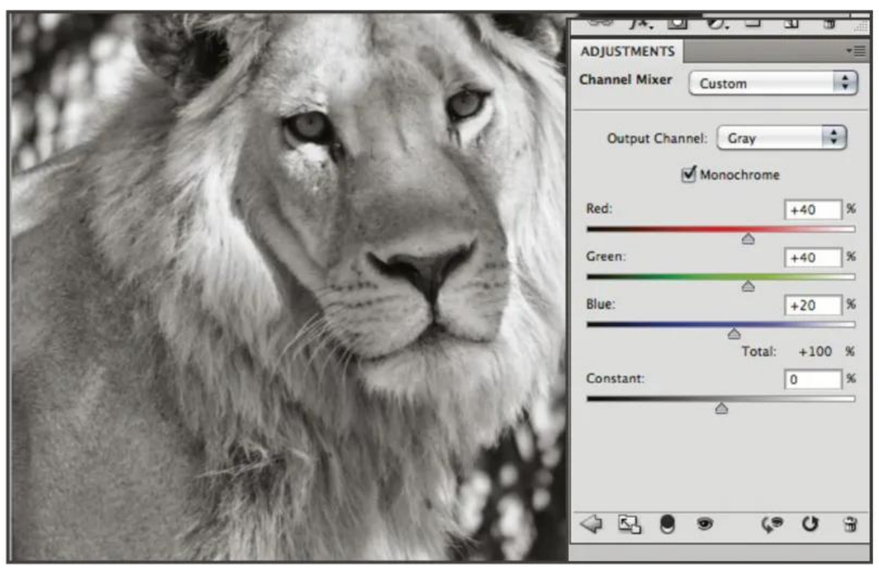
**Blend modes**
With your eye colour down, set the blend mode to Colour and select the Colour Overlay layer style. Apply a warm orange hue then set the Opacity to 40% and the blend mode to Vivid Light.

## Method two The Channel Mixer

Adapt the settings of this very specific adjustment layer to transform your image into monochrome. Even though it's black and white, tweaking the colour channels gives great control over your values




**01** **Channel Mixer** Open your colour image and apply the Channel Mixer adjustment. Do not use this as a fixed application from the Adjustments menu, as we want to be able to keep editing in a non-destructive way. Select the option from the Layers palette adjustment layers instead.




**02** **Value relationships** Once in the Channel Mixer dialog box, activate the Monochrome option to transform your image to greyscale. You'll notice that by default Red and Green are switched to 40% and Blue to 20%. This equates to 100% or perfect black and white.

**03** **Give them a name** Basically if you keep all the setting values equating to 100% your image will show through true black and white, without any oversaturated areas of shadow or light. However, you can create and play with different looks by tweaking each of the red, green and blue channels.

"Once settled on a look that you like, you can save it to use on other projects"

**04** **Save presets** Once you have settled on a look that you like you can save this to use on subsequent projects. It's easy. Access the fly-out menu from your dialog box (top-right) and choose Save Channel Mixer Preset. Name your effect, save it to an easy-to-find location and then load from the same fly-out menu later.

## Quick mask

Try using a quick mask to select an area. Hit Q on your keyboard to begin and select the Brush tool. Set the Foreground colour to black and start painting. This applies a red-coloured mask to that area. Painting with white erases the mask. Now hit Q again to select everything except what you just painted over, or choose Select>Inverse to select the masked area itself.

## High-key effect

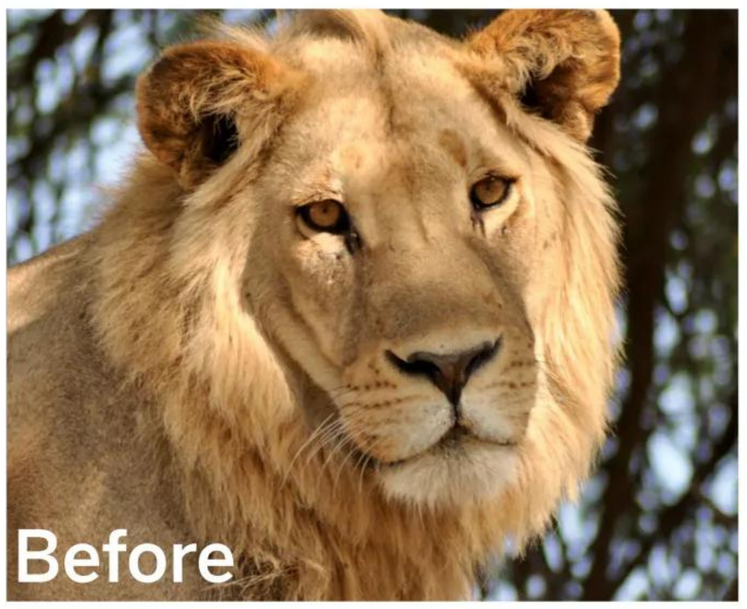
Enhance the focus and exposure in your monochrome images

**Merge layers**
Applying high-key effects is a great way to draw the eye when there's no colour. Merge layers (Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+Shift+E) and select Smart Sharpen.

**Smart sharpen**
Apply the Smart Sharpen filter with 125% Amount and 2px Radius. Duplicate this layer and apply Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur at a Radius of 2px.

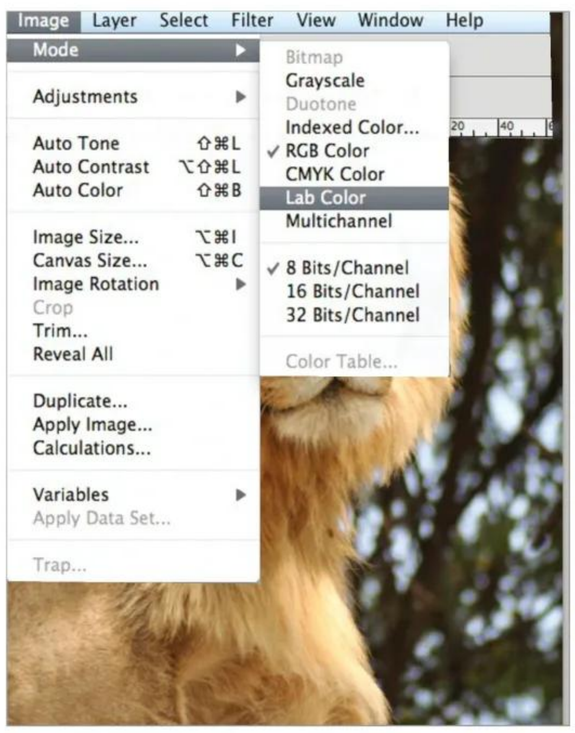
**Layer mask** Apply a layer mask, masking away from the eyes, nose and mouth, bringing these into focus. Duplicate your sharpen layer again, place on top and apply a Gaussian blur with 20px Radius.

**Another mask**
Apply another mask on the face leaving the edges blurred. Apply Curves to blow out the highlights and a Solid Fill adjustment (#563705 tone) set to Color mode at 20% Opacity.

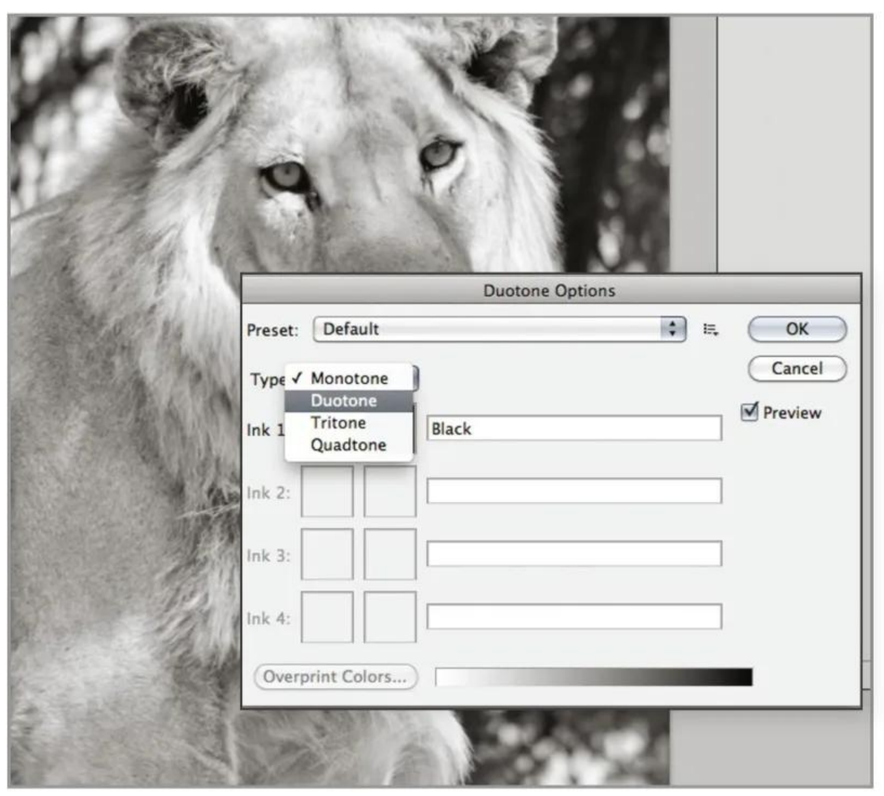


## Method three Master duotone effects

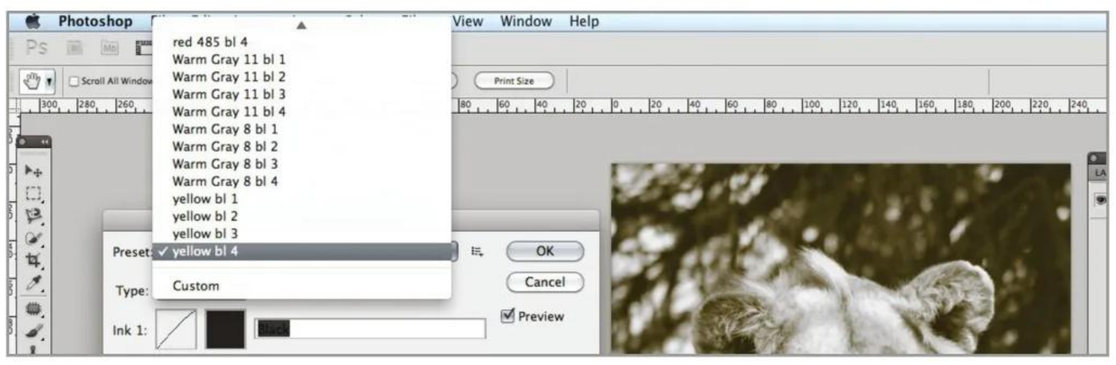
Monochrome doesn't have to be just black and white – the darker tones can be replaced by another colour for dynamic imagery. We show you how to achieve this duotone look



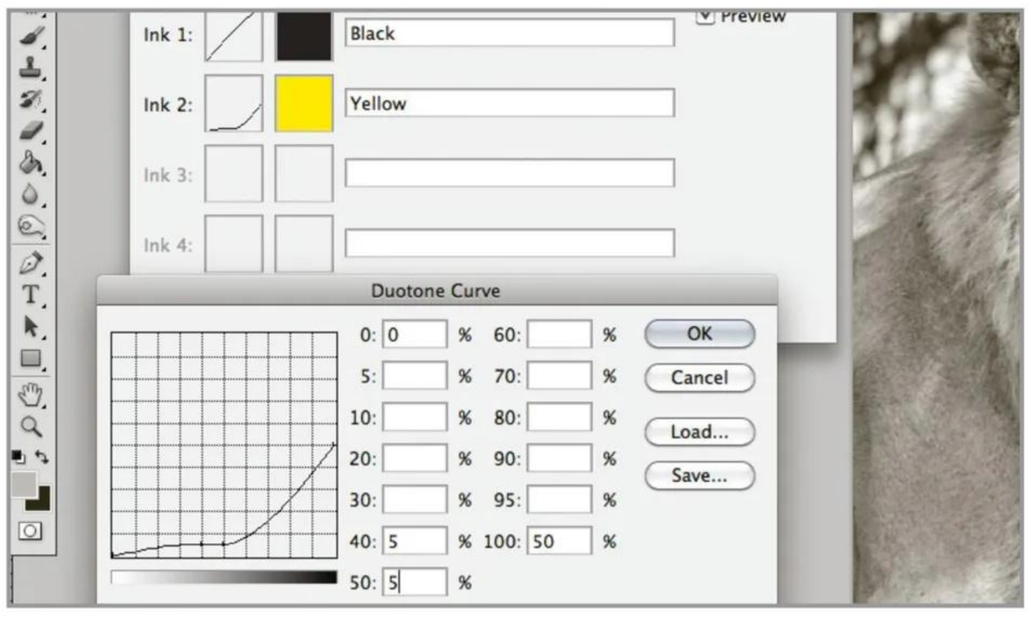

**01 Lab mode** When making monochrome duotone images, first you'll want to even out the greyscale so lights and shadows aren't blown out. The best way to achieve this is to visit the Lab colour mode via Image>Mode>Lab.



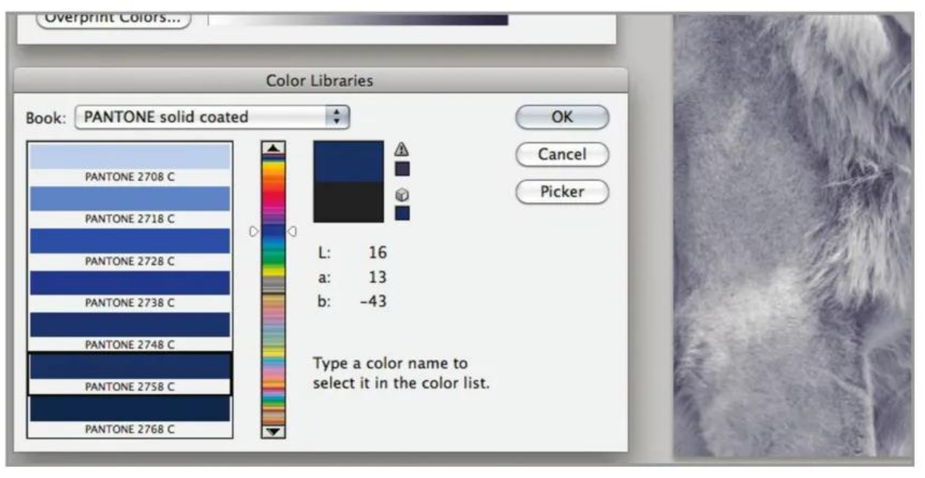

**02 Duotone mode** Select the Lightness Channel only from the Channels palette, then Image>Mode>Grayscale. Flatten your image and select Image>Mode>Duotone, opening the Duotone Options dialog box. Select Duotone from the Type drop-down options.




**03 Duotone presets** Activate the Select Ink Colour options by clicking on the swatch, setting to any Pantone hue you like. Duotone Options comes well equipped with presets, though. Apply Yellow bl 4 from the list and then open the Duotone Curve dialog box.



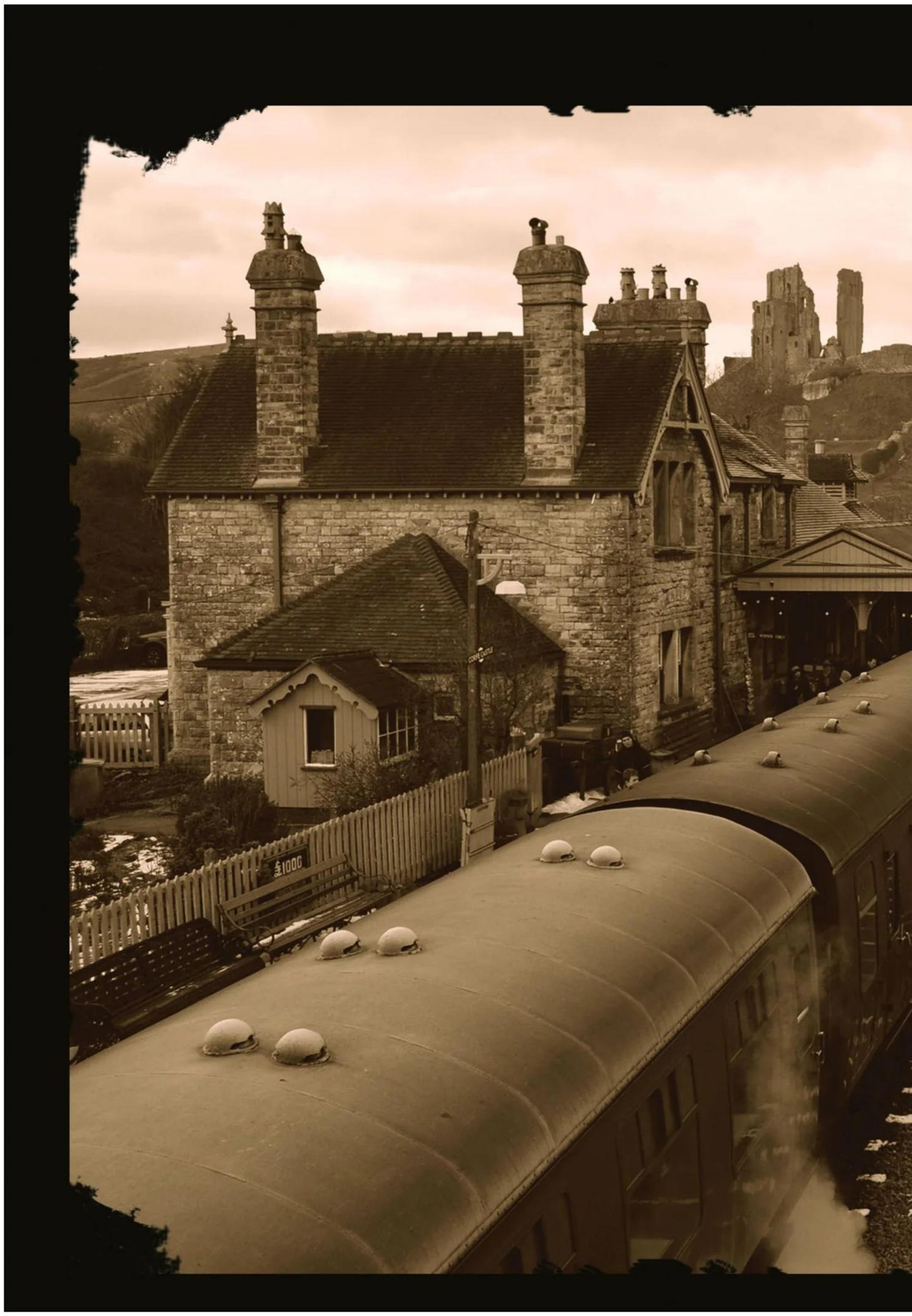

**04 Duotone Curve** Your Duotone Curve determines the spread of a particular chosen colour in your shadows, midtones and highlights. 0 is the highlights, 50 is your midtone value and 100 your shadows. However, presets offer an automatic choice that works most of the time.




**05 Creative additions** You can, of course, experiment further and have a little fun, changing black for a blue tone. You could also sharpen some details and bring out exposure by applying a High Pass filter with a 3px Radius (Filter>Other) set to Vivid Light mode.

# Sepia effects

## Combine several techniques in Elements to introduce a sepia tone into your photographs



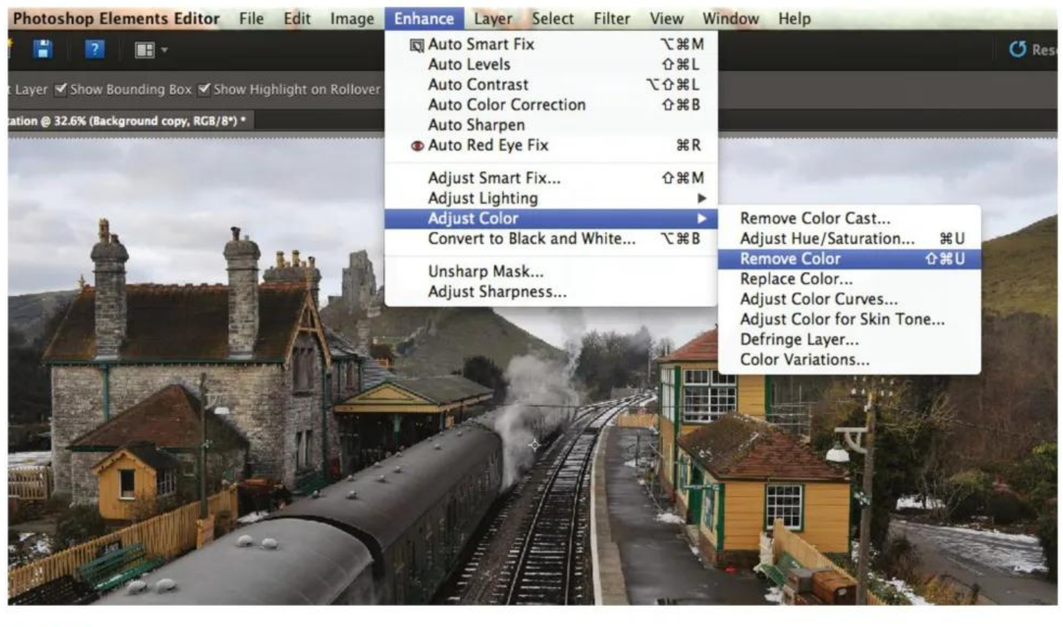
**It's sometimes nice to look to the past for inspiration when editing your images.** Sepia toning was originally a colouring effect used to bring life into black and white photographs. It's also a much more reliable chemical process that gives photographs a longer lifespan, which is why it is widely associated with vintage photographs. Nowadays, it has become its own unique style. Although it may seem counterintuitive to take a colour photograph and then add an effect that was only used due to the limitations that came with shooting with black and white film, it can actually be the perfect finishing touch to your photograph. Sepia toning can capture a mood that is often found to be missing in modern photography.

In this tutorial, we will be aging a colour photograph with a series of colour effects and adjustment layers. Simply load up Photoshop Elements 10 or above to follow along with our step by step guide. Remember, this technique will work with both colour and greyscale images.

## Easy sepia toning

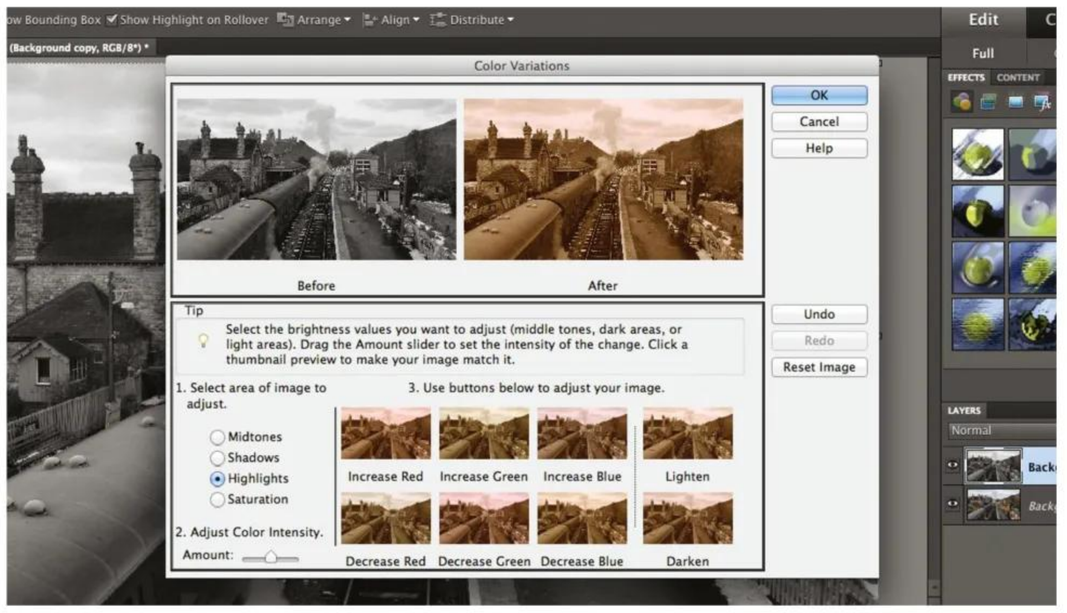
### Add atmosphere to your images

**01** **Setup your project** Make sure that your image mode is set correctly. Even if your photograph is black and white, the image mode must be set to RGB so that we can manage our colour balance later on. Click Image>Mode>RGB to change the mode.




**02** **Remove colour** Ctrl/right-click on your background layer and select Duplicate Layer. Rename the layer and hit OK. When working with a colour photograph, click Enhance>Adjust Colour>Remove Colour. Your image should now be black and white.

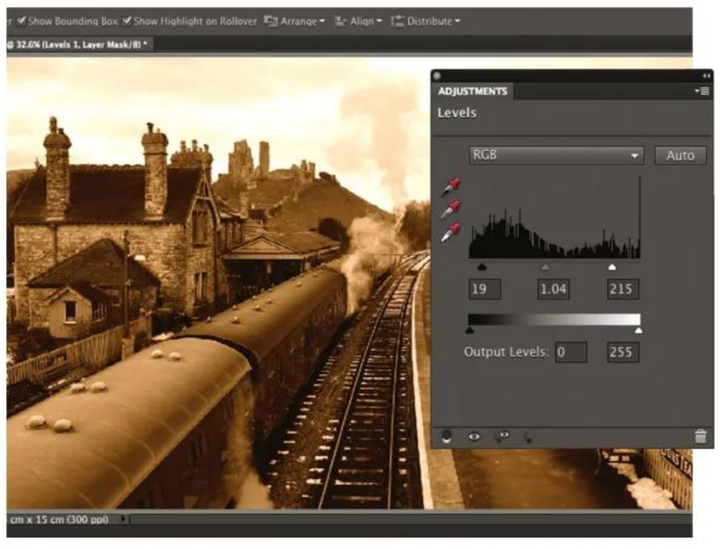
**03** **Insert a sepia tone** With our new image selected, go to Enhance>Adjust Colour>Colour Variation. The Colour Variation window allows us to add colour back into the image. With Midtones selected, click on Increase Red and Increase Green.




**04** **Adjust the tone** In the Colour Variation window, select Shadows. Select Increase Red until you are happy. Repeat with Highlights. Notice how the colour in the shadows and highlights is increasing. Intensify colour wherever you want. Hit OK.

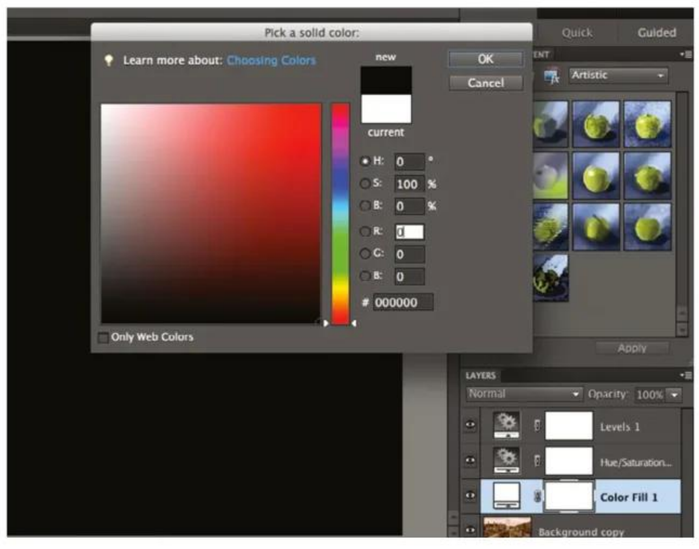
**05** **Levels** At the bottom of your Layers panel, choose Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer>Levels. Click RGB and, from the drop-down menu, select Red. By dragging the middle dial left or right, you are able to adjust the intensity of the red in your image a lot more accurately.

**06** **Final adjustments** Continue working with Levels. From the drop-down menu, select Green. Remember, the colour tone of Sepia is a mix of red and green, giving a reddish/yellowish hue. Adjust the far right dial to bring colour to the highlighted areas in the image.




**07** **Add contrast** Continue working with Levels. From the drop-down menu, return to RGB. Use the dials below the histogram to add some contrast. Slide the left dial inwards to darken your shadows. Do the same with the right hand side to brighten your highlights.

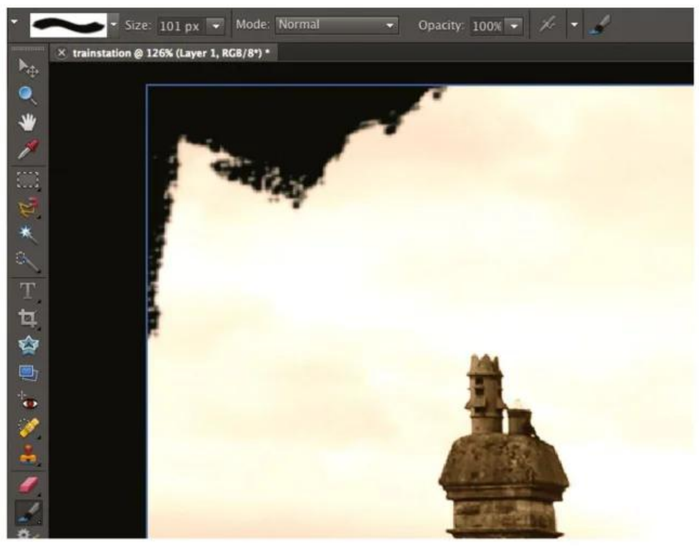
**08** **Adjust saturation** Go to the bottom of your Layers panel. Select Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. The mood of the image changes as you click and drag the Saturation dial down. Desaturate the image until you are happy with it.




**09** **Create a fill layer** Go to Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Colour. Select black as your colour and then hit OK. Select your Colour Fill Layer in the Layers panel and drag it beneath your sepia image layer. This layer will be used to create your border.

**10** **Create a border** Select your image. Go to Image>Transform>Free Transform. By holding down Opt/Alt, you will lock the aspect ratio of your image, so all you have to do then is click and drag your image inwards to reveal your Colour Fill Layer.

**11** **Select a brush type** Select the Brush tool from the Toolbar. Your Options bar will allow you to choose your brush type and size. Select a brush that has uneven edges and is quite spattered. Brush #36 in the default brushes folder is perfect for this.




**12** **Brush the edges** Go to Layer>Create New Layer. From the tool menu, open the Colour Picker and select black. Now repeatedly click your brush over the corners of your image to create the effect of frayed edges. If you make a mistake, undo it with the Eraser tool.

"Sepia toning can capture a mood that is often found to be missing in modern photography"

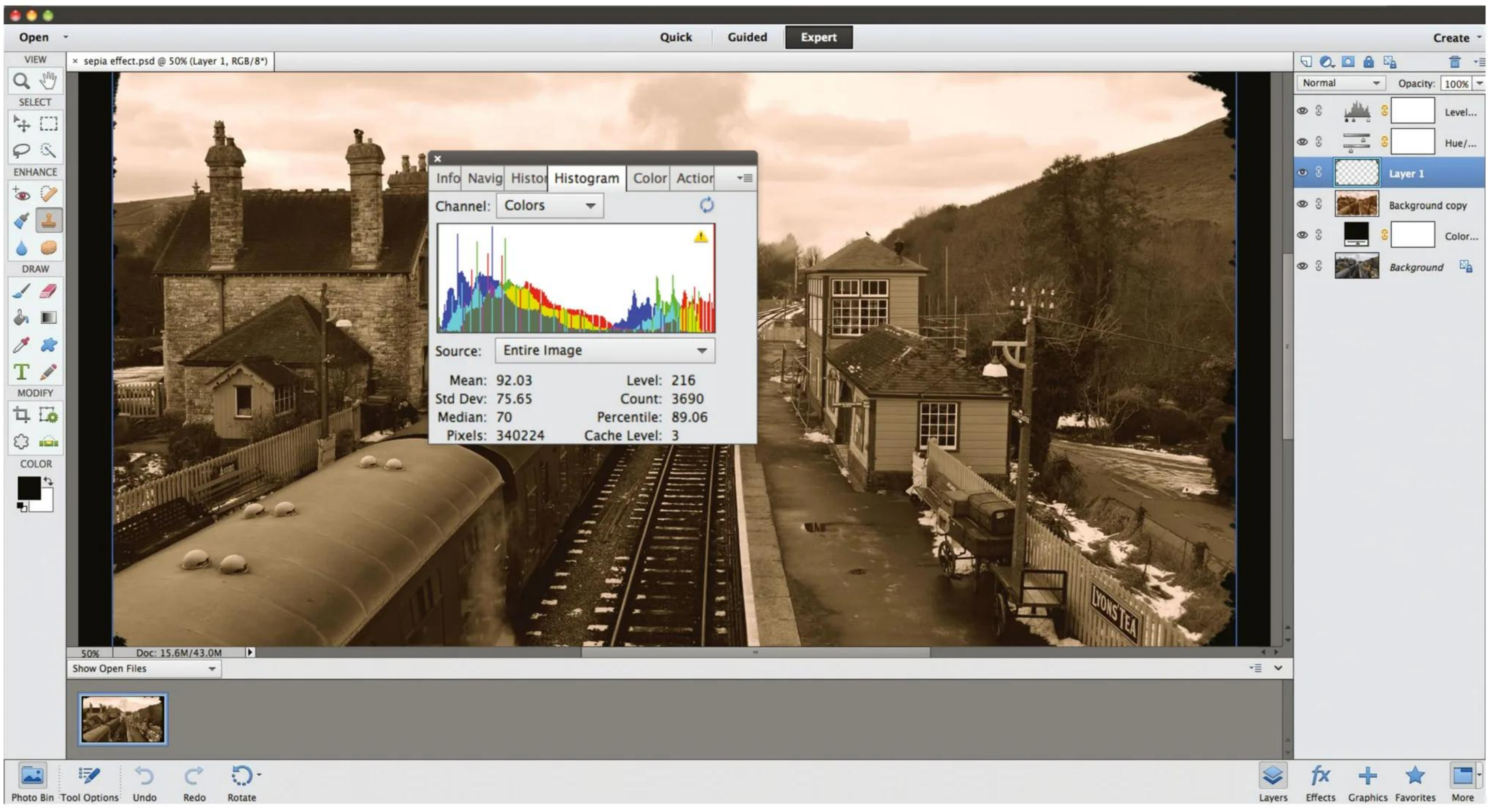
# The Histogram

## See an image's colour information at a glance

**The Histogram is a valuable reference tool for editing your photographs.** You can access it via the Window menu and it makes the Tonal Range of your image visible. The Tonal Range of an image is everything from the darkest part of the image to the lightest. So an image with a lot of shadowing will show very high levels on the left hand side of the histogram (the side representing shadows) and lower levels on the right hand side of the histogram (the side representing highlights). This can be useful when balancing the exposure levels of an image.

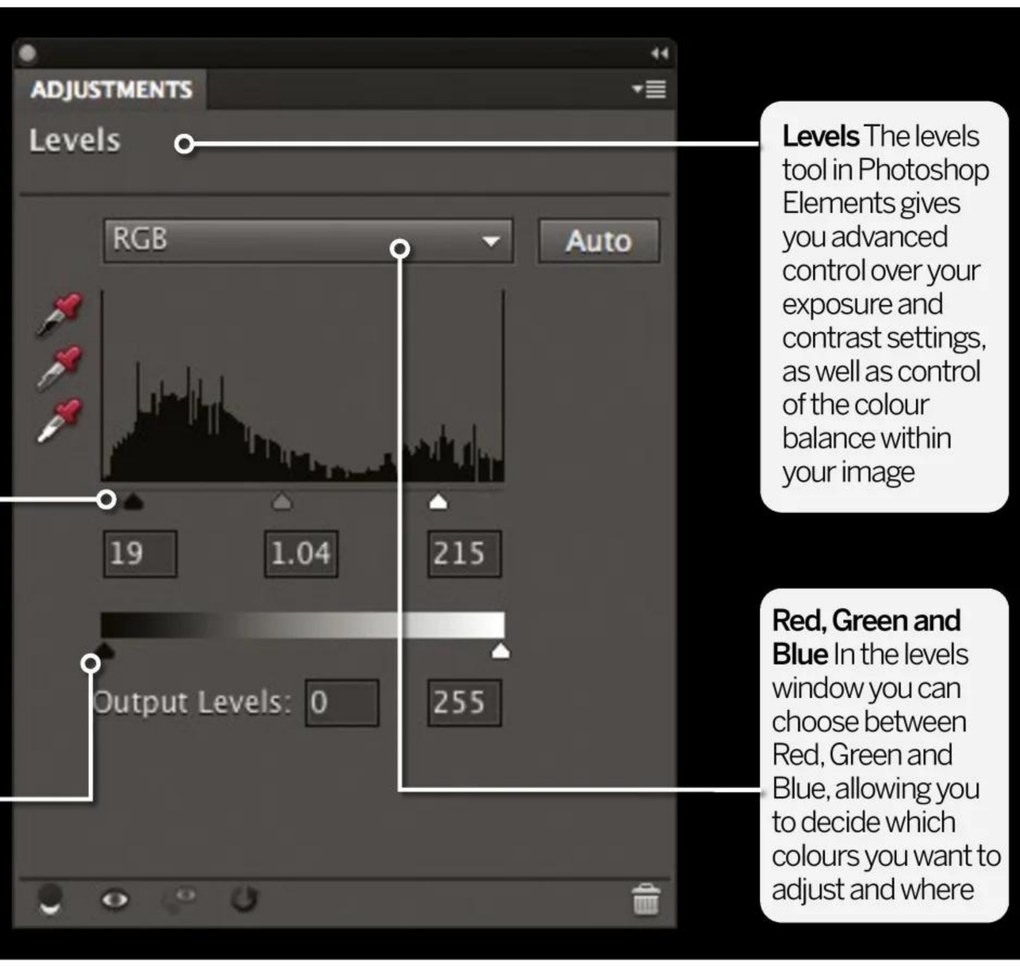
### Exposure

Exposure is the amount of light in which a photo was taken. Underexposed digital photos are too dark; overexposed ones, too light. You can adjust this manually in Photoshop and Photoshop Elements using Levels.




## Closer look
## Levels

### The Levels palette close up




**Highlights, Midtones and Shadows** The three dials below the histogram affect (from left to right) the shadows, midtones and highlights in your image

**Contrast** By darkening the shadows in your image and brightening the highlights, you are increasing the contrast between the light and dark parts of the image

**Levels** The levels tool in Photoshop Elements gives you advanced control over your exposure and contrast settings, as well as control of the colour balance within your image

**Red, Green and Blue** In the levels window you can choose between Red, Green and Blue, allowing you to decide which colours you want to adjust and where

"Photoshop's Levels command makes overall tonal and colour correction simple and easy"

# The Black & White Photography Book

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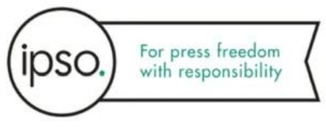

# The Black & White Photography Book

## Advance your grasp of black and white photography with expert techniques and essential tips for your best monochrome yet

The Black & White Photography Book provides you with professional advice, techniques and tutorials to help you become a master of the medium

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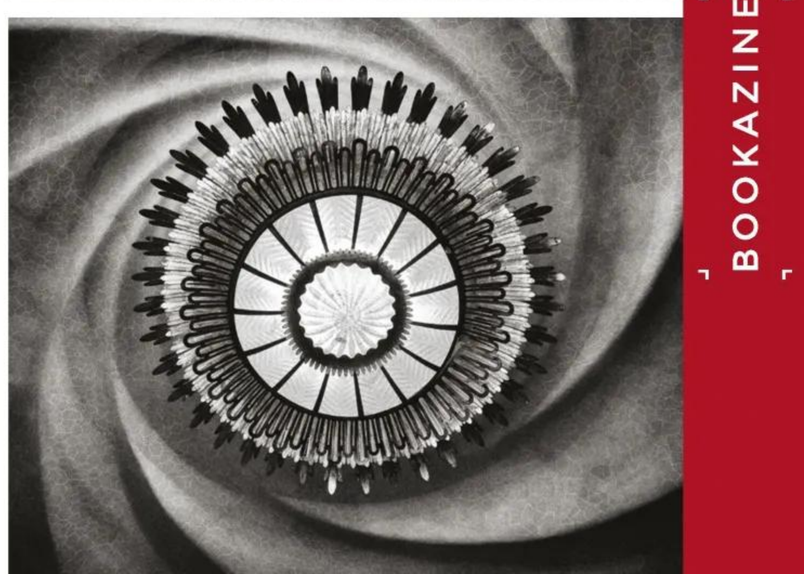

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